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# Fractured Paradigms: Preparing Teachers for Ethnocultural Diversity

by

John Timothy Goddard

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Department of Educational Administration

Edmonton, Alberta

Spring, 1996

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled **Fractured Paradigms: Preparing Teachers for Ethnocultural Diversity** submitted by John Timothy Goddard in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of **Doctor of Philosophy**.

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Dr. R. G. McIntosh

## Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated with love and gratitude to the women in my life -- my grandmothers, mother, mother-in-law, wife, and daughters -- whose dreams, strength, support, and encouragement made it possible.

Elsie Kate Benstead Day
Mary Elizabeth Palmer Goddard

Olive Betty Day Goddard

Kathleen Vardy Stanhope West

Sally Frances Emma West Goddard

Nichola Kathleen Sarah Goddard
Victoria Emma Clare Goddard
Katherine (Kate) Frances Mary Goddard

**Abstract**

The purpose of the study was to explore the extent to which teachers are being prepared to be effective educators for the variety of student ethnocultural populations found in contemporary Western Canadian schools and to suggest ways in which that preparation might be further facilitated and enhanced.

The study employed a two stage design to collect data. In the first stage the data were collected by means of a survey questionnaire completed by 228 respondents. The initial survey was drawn from the literature, validated through the opinions of respondents in a pilot study, and then administered to a sample of the larger population.

In the second stage a purposive sample of respondents was interviewed. Data collected through the questionnaire responses and subsequent interviews were then described and analyzed. The interviews provided the researcher with the opportunity to select specific findings from the questionnaire analyses and focus special attention upon these areas.

The results of the study indicate that new teachers who reported an ethnocultural emphasis in their preservice teacher education programs would not necessarily perform more effectively with ethnoculturally diverse and ethnoculturally different students in their classrooms unless they had also experienced what they perceived to be an ethnocultural focus during their initiation to teaching. The initiation phase of initial inservice experiences incorporated activities related to the induction of new teachers, the provision of inservice activities focused on the needs of new teachers, and the development of a mentoring program. The findings of the study suggest that these activities should constitute an integral part of the professional development strategies of a school or school system.

The study results suggest that no substantive differences in the number or type of problems experienced as a beginning teacher were based solely on the ethnocultural

focus provided in the preservice teacher education. The findings indicate that an ethnocultural focus in preservice teacher education was not related to an increase in the problems faced by beginning teachers and was, under certain circumstances, related to a decrease in the number and type of problems experienced by beginning teachers.

The study concluded that knowledge of 'best practices' in the teaching of ethnoculturally diverse populations was available in the literature, but that such practices appear to be rarely implemented. In implementing the suggestions emanating from this research, together with other 'best practices' identified in the literature, educators can help to improve the educational experience and academic success of students who are ethnoculturally different from their teachers and of students who are enrolled in ethnoculturally diverse classrooms.

**Acknowledgements**

That this study was completed is due to the assistance received, either directly or indirectly, from a great many people. To all of them I extend my gratitude and thanks. I would like to specially acknowledge my indebtedness to Dr. E. W. Ratsoy, my dissertation advisor, for his kindness, time, and patience. His other duties and responsibilities notwithstanding, he always made me feel that I was his only concern.

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This study could not have been undertaken without the cooperation and contributions of over 225 beginning teachers. I thank them for their generosity and for sharing their experiences, hopes, and aspirations. I would also like to thank their superintendents, directors, and principals for allowing me to gain access to them.

The financial assistance provided by the Izaak Walton Killam Research Scholarship enabled me to pursue avenues which would otherwise have been ignored. I acknowledge my indebtedness to those members of the Killam Trust Committee who granted me this prestigious award, and to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for the University of Alberta doctoral scholarship which preceded the Killam.

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Mipela i laik toktok 'tanku tru' long ol, na lukim yu behain.

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# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

My initial interest in this area of inquiry developed during my experiences with a number of First Nations schools in northern Canada, beginning in 1984. In these environments I observed some teachers floundering as they sought to work with children who were ethnoculturally different from themselves. Prior to their employment the teachers had acquired a cultural knowledge of First Nations. This had given them a surface understanding of the cultural differences between one First Nation and another, usually from a historical context. The teachers did not, however, appear to have acquired those attitudes, skills, and pedagogical knowledge which many educators have identified as being necessary for the effective teaching of Aboriginal students (e.g., Barnhardt, 1982; Kirkness, 1992; Kleinfeld, 1974; Lomawaima, 1995; Philips, 1993; U. S. Department of Education, 1995).

On arriving in Edmonton, in 1993, I observed that the schools in which my daughters were enrolled had a high level of ethnocultural diversity among the students. I wondered whether their teachers were finding it difficult to be equally effective educators to all members of such an ethnoculturally heterogeneous student population. Discussions with some of those teachers, together with comments made by students in an undergraduate course I taught for the Department of Educational Administration at the University of Alberta, indicated that this was indeed the case.

This study focused on the problem of preparing teachers to work effectively with students from a variety of ethnocultural populations. The study involved the surveying of 150 teachers from each of three distinct sociogeographic areas. Following the initial survey, semi-structured interviews were conducted with a purposive sample of those teachers. The general research problem addressed in the study was to determine whether teachers who had experienced an ethnocultural emphasis in their preservice and inservice teacher education programs performed more effectively with ethnoculturally diverse and ethnoculturally different students in their classrooms than did those who had no similar emphasis in their preparatory programs.

## Context

The current focus on multicultural and minority education issues in North America has provided an impetus for educators to explore the preparation of effective teachers for ethnoculturally diverse student populations. Recent analyses of North American census data indicate that over 70% of current inservice and preservice teachers are white, middle class females from suburban communities or small rural towns (Banks, 1991; Grant & Secada, 1990; Lockhart, 1991). A large number of students, however, are neither white nor middle class, and demographic trends indicate that ethnocultural diversity will continue to be the dominant feature of contemporary classrooms (Avery & Walker, 1993; Ducharme & Ducharme, 1993).

In California, Dianda (1991) found that 69% of the new teachers in that state taught classes having students for whom English was a second language. Other researchers have concluded that one third of American students belong to minority ethnocultural groups (Gonzalez, 1993; Tanner, 1993). In Canada, Moodley (1995) reported that 46% of students in Vancouver speak English as a second language, as do 47% of students in Toronto (p. 802). An analysis of the 1991 census (Statistics Canada, 1993) found that "31 per cent of the population reported an ethnic background that did not include British or French origins" (p. 5), which represents a 6% increase over the 25.3% reported in the early 1970s (Moodley, 1995, p. 802). This ethnocultural diversity was especially true in Western Canada, where the non-British and non-French group constituted 47% of the population of Manitoba, 46% of that in Saskatchewan, and 41% of the population in Alberta (Statistics Canada, 1993, p. 8). The census data, while limited in that they only describe the ethnic background of those over the age of 18 years, suggest that the student population in Western Canadian schools would exhibit an ethnocultural diversity similar to or greater than that found in American schools.

Concurrently, the weak economic climate has resulted in teachers remaining in their permanent positions and not seeking jobs elsewhere. This, in turn, has led to a shortage of positions for new teachers in the suburban and rural communities where many of them were born and raised. The majority of available positions are to be found in either inner city environments with ethnoculturally diverse student populations or else in isolated rural communities where ethnoculturally homogeneous student populations exhibit linguistic, cultural, and social patterns quite different from those of the majority of new teachers.

The issue arises, therefore, as to how teachers might best be prepared to be effective educators in ethnoculturally diverse classrooms. This preparation is not limited to preservice teacher education programs but also includes the support programs provided to beginning teachers during their early experiences in a new school. Although a number of teacher education programs are focussing on the preparation of minority teachers, this is not in itself a solution to the problem. As Ogbu (1993), Philips (1993), and others have noted, the very act of immersion into an Anglo teacher education program is often enough to assimilate a minority person into the majority culture. Even if this were not the case, it is unlikely that minority candidates will be recruited into the profession quickly enough to provide a sufficient number of ethnoculturally compatible teachers (Dianda, 1991; Gonzalez, 1993; Greer & Husk, 1989; U.S. Department of Education, 1995). It therefore appears necessary that all teachers be prepared to be effective in a variety of ethnocultural settings.

The teachers in most public, separate, and First Nations schools in Canada have all followed similar teacher education programs. These programs rarely appear to provide a focus on the variety of sociocultural milieux in which teachers will function once they graduate from a teacher education program. Although the content, curriculum, and general organization of Canadian teacher education programs reflect the majority culture (e.g., white, Anglo, middle class), this is not reflective of the ethnocultural environment most teachers will experience in the majority of contemporary Canadian schools. The ethnocultural homogeneity of a small rural community, the ethnocultural heterogeneity of an urban school, and the ethnocultural differences between teachers and students in a First Nations school, are all issues related to the ethnocultural preparation of teachers.

If Canadians are becoming more resistant to and less tolerant of recent immigrant minority groups, as recent public opinion polls would suggest (Canadians showing . . ., 1994), then the abilities of teachers to sensitize students to issues of racism, stereotyping and multiculturalism are as important as their ability to function effectively with a variety of student populations. This study explored the extent to which teachers, through their teacher education programs and their experiences in the field, had been provided with the type of preparation which facilitates effectiveness in an ethnoculturally diverse classroom.

Roth (1992) stated that "we must strengthen teacher education by employing the research base" (p. 6). I believe that there is a great deal of research which provides

insight into ethnoculturally effective teaching practices, and that the ethnocultural preparation of teachers is an area of importance to the field. In this study I compared the research base on what ought to constitute the ethnocultural preparation of teachers with the teachers' perceptions of the ethnocultural preparation they actually experienced as part of their preservice and inservice teacher education.

## Purpose of the Study

The primary purpose of the study was to explore the extent to which teachers are being prepared to be effective educators for the variety of student ethnocultural populations found in contemporary Western Canadian schools and, if appropriate, to suggest ways in which that preparation might be facilitated and enhanced.

Ducharme and Ducharme (1993), on assuming the joint editorship of the Journal of Teacher Education, began their first editorial by emphatically stating that

> Teacher education in the 1990s and beyond faces enormous challenges. . . . [The problems and issues include the] lack of racial and ethnic diversity among ourselves and in teacher education candidates compared with the tremendous diversity of the students they will teach in the coming decades. (p. 2)

Lawton (1987) noted that it is "necessary to locate educational change in the context of complex processes of technological, social and cultural changes, before describing the implications for teacher education" (p. 91). Education and schooling are activities which occur within a specific community context. This context is determined by the sociocultural, sociopolitical, socioeconomic, socioecological, and socioethnic influences of the community. Spindler (1987) has described this as a search for the "sociocultural contextualization of the educative process" (p. 70), a search which was pursued throughout this study.

## Significance

The study has significance in that it addresses areas which have been identified in the literature as being of concern to both teachers and teacher educators. These relate to the actual ethnocultural diversity of the student population; the ethnocultural differences, if any, between the teacher and the student body; the ethnocultural focus, if any, of preservice teacher education programs; and the provision of supportive inservice experiences to new teachers in ethnoculturally diverse classroom settings. There have been few attempts to provide empirical data related to these areas from

within a Canadian context. The study examines the ethnocultural preparation of teachers, broadly defined, and does so from within the sociocultural context of contemporary schools in Western Canada.

**Theoretical Implications**

Conceptually, an ethnocultural framework was used for the study. Such a framework expands the definitions of cultural difference beyond a mere identification of race. Rather, the multicultural (Banks, 1995; Ladson-Billings, 1995) or polycultural (Williams, 1977) dimensions of religion, gender, residence, socioeconomic status, language, behaviour, thought patterns, learning styles, and so forth, are incorporated, together with race, into the concept of ethnocultural diversity. The preparation of teachers to be effective with an ethnoculturally diverse population, or with an ethnoculturally homogeneous population different from that of the teacher, includes both the formal and non-formal, or preservice and inservice, components of teacher education. As such, it deals with the transitional period during which a teacher leaves student life and enters the profession.

Avery and Walker (1993) noted that "there is little evidence that the predominantly white teaching force is prepared at either the preservice or inservice level to meet the needs of today's students" (p. 27). I hypothesized that ethnoculturally sensitive teacher education programs, when combined with initial teaching experiences where known methods of teaching ethnoculturally diverse students were stressed, would result in a cadre of teachers who perceived themselves properly prepared to be effective teachers of ethnoculturally diverse and ethnoculturally different students.

Effective teaching requires a knowledge of how children learn. That natural learning occurs within the ethnocultural context of the child's home and community has been well established (e.g., Afele-Fa'amuli, 1992; Gayle, 1993; Tomlinson, 1983). The need for teacher education programs to prepare preservice teachers for the realities of ethnoculturally diverse classrooms, with the associated diversity of student learning styles, has been thoroughly described (e.g., Hall, 1993; Roth, 1992; U.S. Department of Education, 1990). Further, the notion that orientation and induction programs should provide the opportunity for beginning teachers to discover the ethnocultural idiosyncrasies of the community in which they are working has received support from a number of recent studies (e.g., Draper, Fraser, & Taylor, 1992; McCarty & Zepeda, 1992; Reynolds, 1992). What is unclear is the extent to which that knowledge is being incorporated into the teacher preparation process.

This research study contributes to our knowledge of that aspect of the teaching continuum first queried by Sarason, Davidson, and Blatt (1986), namely the relationship which exists between the preparation of teachers and the realities they experience when they embark on their careers. Cazden and Mahan (1989) noted that "teachers and students [in the 1990s] will not share [the same] cultural and social experiences" (p. 54) and that there is a need to address the educational needs of minority groups by sensitizing prospective teachers to issues of ethnocultural diversity through the teacher education process. In talking to some teacher educators, I discovered a tendency to assume that this was indeed being addressed. In practice, for example as Dianda (1991) found in California, many beginning teachers do not consider the cultural preparation they received during their preservice programs to be effective in the 'real world' of the classroom. That such transfer occurs with respect to other pedagogical issues (Regan & Hannah, 1993) suggests that it is the process of preparing teachers for ethnocultural diversity which is at fault, as opposed to the concept of such preparation.

The study also makes a contribution to the knowledge base by seeking to determine which, if any, of those strategies that have been reported in the literature as proving effective with ethnoculturally varied student populations are actually part of the preparation or practice of teachers.

**Practical Implications**

The study has practical significance in that the question of what might be done to improve the quality of education by enhancing the quality of teachers and teacher education programs is one of great importance. Regan and Hannah (1993) noted that "there is a link between the philosophy and pedagogy of our [teacher education] program and the practice of its graduates. . . . Their teacher preparation had a lasting impact [on their professional practice]" (p. 311). To improve the teacher preparation program is one means of improving the practices of teachers in the classroom.

As far as more experienced teachers are concerned, such exposure to more effective practice may have a salutary effect. While recognizing Jackson and McKay's (1993) caveat that practices are seldom "abandoned simply on the basis of research findings" (p. 2), it may be that another small piece of research will add to the weight of rationality so that an inappropriate practice, if not abandoned, will be at least amended to reflect the research findings. Failing this, the usage of more effective teaching practices by

their younger colleagues may by example serve to overcome or amend those ineffective practices which remain in the repertoires of experienced teachers.

The findings of the study have implications for the structure and content of teacher education programs, and have led to recommendations with respect to the organization of the recruitment and initiation phases of the early inservice experiences of teachers.

**Implications for Research**

One contribution of this study to the body of existing research is an indication of the actual ethnocultural diversity or heterogeneity to be found in the student population of Canada. Although a number of studies (e.g., Banks, 1991; Grossman, 1991; Leake, 1993; Roth, 1992) have discussed ethnocultural heterogeneity in American schools, there have been few attempts to produce Canadian data. Such data are important if teachers are to be effectively prepared for the ethnocultural diversity and ethnocultural differences between teachers and students which are presumed to exist.

Avery and Walker (1993) noted that "there is evidence that most teachers have limited knowledge about cultural and linguistic groups different from their own" (p. 27). Corson (1993) described the problems faced in New Zealand by "mainly monocultural teachers [who] were called upon to introduce the policy of *taha Maori* (things Maori) in schools" (p. 48). Razali (1992) recommended that sociolinguistic training be compulsory in all teacher preparation programs so as to increase teachers' awareness of the different needs of different groups of pupils. In order that effective ethnocultural preparation occurs, however, there is a prerequisite that data are available to indicate the actual extent of ethnocultural diversity in the schools. This study contributes to the research base by providing some indication of this diversity in contemporary Western Canadian schools.

**Why Ethnocultural? A Rationale and Definition**

In discussing the cultural dialectic (Moore, 1994) between Anglo teachers and students from different cultural backgrounds, a variety of terms have come into common usage. Culturally diverse, culturally homogeneous, culturally heterogeneous, and culturally different are all used as descriptors for the cultural background of student populations being compared with the cultural background of the teacher.

In an educational setting, however, the very term 'culture' requires elaboration. Does this simply refer to ethnicity, with Anglo and First Nation and Chinese and African being the differentiating characteristics? If so, to what extent could one justifiably reduce the label used to define a group? Should Anglo refer to all of

European heritage, be they English or French or Italian? Is it a linguistic issue, referring to those for whom English is a first language and, if so, how would one differentiate between English and Scot and Channel Islander, all of whom share a common language and yet have quite different cultural backgrounds? There are many aboriginal First Nations in Canada, of which one is known as the Dene, or people. Within the Dene, however, there are a number of individual and separate Nations who share variations of a common language; the Slavey, Dogrib, and Chipewyan peoples, for example. Even within one specific language group, such as the Chipewyan, there are sub-groups with distinct cultural patterns -- the People of the Caribou, the People of the Trembling Aspen, and so forth. To define a group in terms of either ethnicity or language alone may lead to problems of precision in terms of interpretation.

If both language and ethnicity could be used as descriptors, and yet neither is useful as the definitive descriptor, then should culture be that as defined by anthropologists such as Benedict (1959/1934), Malinowski (1926), or Mead (1955)? Harris (1980) summarized the anthropological definition as being "the learned patterns of behaviour and thought characteristic of a societal group" (p. 557). This definition, however, does not take into account those who have unlearned the patterns of behaviour of their own society by immersion in Anglo teacher education programs and subsequent enculturation into the patterns of behaviour and thought characteristic of majority society. Nor, indeed, does it take into account those who have self-identified with a particular group and yet, for a variety of reasons, share neither language, behaviour, nor geographic residence with the majority of that group. Such groups include many of the Métis people, for example, as well as third generation Canadians born of Chinese descent.

After much deliberation I have chosen to use a term which appears to incorporate all those facets of what makes up a person or group. This term deals with ethnicity, or racial background, and with aspects of culture including nuances of language, heritage, personal behaviour, thought patterns (with implications for teaching and learning styles), and self-identification. Furthermore, I chose a term which invokes neither the radical political connotations associated with multiculturalism (e.g., Nieto, 1992; Sleeter, 1989), the basing of multiculturalism "on 'ideology' rather than on 'culture' as lived by the people" (John Ogbu, personal communication, March 1996), nor the distinctions between multicultural and antiracist education (Sleeter, 1995) found in

current discussions in the field. This term, 'ethnocultural,' is not a new concept but rather one which has enjoyed some usage in the literature of the past 25 years.

I first came across the term in a paper presented by James Ryan at the Canadian Society for the Study of Education conference (Ryan & Wignall, 1994). A subsequent search of the ERIC and PsycLIT databases located 93 references to the term. The earliest reference is in a bibliography of Canadian ethnic groups compiled by the Ontario government (Gregorovich, 1972). The term has also been widely used in the psychological and medical literature since the early 1970s.

Edelstein (1974) discussed how ethnocultural identity influences the experience and mastery of pain while Zuelzer, Stedman, and Adams (1976) explored the influence of ethnocultural and socioeconomic determinants on the IQ scores of first grade students. The studies of Jalali, Jalali, and Turner (1978), at Yale, focused on how ethnocultural background affected patient attitudes toward mental illness while Ageyev (1988) pursued similar ethnopsychological research in Russia. There are references to ethnocultural issues in literature from the fields of psychotherapy (e.g., Comas-Diaz & Jacobsen, 1987, 1991; Remington & DaCosta, 1989), health care delivery (e.g., Browne, 1986; Wang & Marsh, 1992), and substance abuse (Terrell, 1993), to provide some examples.

The transfer to education appears to have occurred by osmosis through the membrane of educational psychology and linguistics. For example, Fishman (1980) and Danesi (1983) discuss bilingualism and language development in different ethnocultural groups while Shade (1989) explores differences in perceptual development. This is somewhat surprising, as one might anticipate that the expected route would be through anthropology and educational foundations. That it was not further strengthens the need for care in the use of the term, and supports the suggestion that ethnocultural diversity is more than an issue of language or ethnicity.

The Manitoba Department of Education (1984) and Lister (1987) discussed the need for a recognition of ethnocultural diversity among curriculum developers, a policy requirement also described by Mock and Masemann (1989). This recognition of a multiplicity of ethnocultural groups has also been explored by Friesen (1987), Porter-Fantini (1989), and others. Churchill (1990) has discussed the need for the evaluation of educational policy to recognize the ethnocultural diversity of those affected by that policy. In this he is reinforcing the comments of Boyd (1978), who explored the role of the public education system in the mediation and resolution of social and

ethnocultural class conflicts arising from the implementation of ethnoculturally insensitive policy ideas.

In using the term ethnocultural, therefore, I am including all those dimensions previously described. The term is not restricted to a simple identification by ethnicity or language. Williams (1977) coined the term "polycultural" to reflect these varied dimensions, but I do not agree that a second level of terminology is required. As Williams defines it, polycultural education is:

> those educational experiences which the school provides to enable students to better appreciate and value their own ethnocultural dimensions and the ethnocultural dimensions of others. Every American [sic] is polycultural, having many ethnocultural dimensions, for example white-Irish-Pentecostal-Yankee, Native American-Seminole-female-Floridian-urban, black-southern-protestant-rural, Chinese-bilingual-Californian-male, Mexican-multilingual-Catholic-midwestern. (p. 7)

These dimensions, taken together with those previously described, form a working definition of the term ethnocultural as used in this study.

Ethnocultural is conceptualized as consisting of a number of variables. These variables are simultaneously competing and complementary, for each impacts upon the others to a greater or lesser extent. Three key variables constitute the core meaning of the term and eight other variables are perceived to modify those key variables. The three key variables are ethnicity, shared patterns of socially acceptable behaviour, and language. The modifying variables are social class, gender, age, economic status, family structure, religion, geographical location, and access to political power. The discussion of ethnocultural diversity therefore is a discussion of a variety of combinations of the three key variables, influenced as they are by the modifying variables. It is also recognized, although not explored in this study, that many communities are also marginalized by their socioeconomic class status. The three key variables are accepted as being the most effective means of distinguishing one ethnocultural group from another, with the influence of the modifying variables on each ethnocultural group being implicitly recognized in the discussion.

## Other Definitions

For the purposes of clarity, definitions are provided for other terms used throughout this proposal.

Teacher education programs (TEPs): Formalized programs of studies and practica which prepare selected candidates for a possible career in the teaching profession.

Learning style: The cognitive process by which a student is most likely to acquire and internalize new information.

Teaching or instructional style: The strategies, behaviours and modes of delivery which are utilized by the teacher in order to transmit knowledge to the student.

Sociocultural contextualization: The ethnocultural homogeneity or heterogeneity of students in a class, and the relationship between the ethnocultural background of those students and that of the teacher. Three distinct relationships have been identified:

> Ethnoculturally similar: The dominant teacher-student relationship features ethnoculturally homogeneous student populations taught by teachers who are ethnoculturally the same as or similar to the majority of their students.
>
> Ethnoculturally different: The dominant teacher-student relationship features ethnoculturally congruent student populations taught by teachers who are ethnoculturally different from the majority of their students.
>
> Ethnoculturally diverse: The dominant teacher-student relationship features ethnoculturally diverse student populations taught by teachers who are ethnoculturally different from the majority of their students.

Anglo: This term is drawn from Philips' (1993) definition and is "a cultural term [which] is used . . . to refer to people descended from English ancestors whose culture shows the strong influence of that English heritage" (p. 16).

Ethnocultural heterogeneity: A group of people who are from a variety of different ethnic groups and display distinctive cultural patterns and learning styles.

Ethnocultural homogeneity: A group of people who are from a single ethnic group and display similar cultural patterns and learning styles.

Majority cultural group: The ethnic group whose economic and political power is such that their cultural patterns are held to be the norm for the country as a whole.

Minority cultural groups: Those ethnic groups, other than the majority, who exist in the country. Ogbu (1993) has identified three subsets of minority cultural groups:

> Domestic minority: Those ethnic groups which, by virtue of conquest and/or colonization, have become a minority within their indigenous borders.

Immigrant minority: Those ethnic groups which have chosen to leave their country of origin and have become a minority group in another country.

Autonomous minority: Those groups which are ethnically similar to the majority cultural group but which have their own patterns of behaviour and other cultural identification.

Recruitment: The process of hiring teachers, which includes advertising the position, interviewing candidates, screening the interviewees and making a selection as to hiring.

Initiation: The process of familiarizing teachers with the school and/or school system, a process which includes an initial orientation, a planned process of induction, a mentoring system (if in place) and any planned or informal process of inservice teacher development.

Orientation is the process by which teachers are first introduced to their new school.

Induction is the continued socialization of the teacher to the school and school system, after the initial period of orientation has been concluded.

Mentoring is the third part of the initiation process. As Van Thielen (1992) noted, a comprehensive mentoring program is not a duplication of the teacher education program but a structured process which assists the beginning teacher while reassuring established staff that they and their experiences are valued and respected.

Inservice programs are those planned activities which allow teachers, during and as a part of their employment, to further develop their skills.

Other definitions are included, where appropriate, throughout the text.

## Sociocultural Contextualization

Clune (1991) noted that "there has been an almost total failure of detailed design of how to deal with student [cultural] heterogeneity" (p. 131). Indeed, serious problems of policy implementation in schools arise simply because such policies are developed at the systemic, regional, or provincial level and reflect a 'big picture' mentality. When implemented, however, successful policies must be "responsive to local context, influenced by embedded culture, both educational and social, and heavily impacted by race and socioeconomic status" (p. 126). Although a number of researchers have explored the nature of school culture and context, few have addressed what Corson (1991) described as the task of helping schools become "more organic to [their] cultural community" (p. 7).

Katz and Raths (1992) discussed six dilemmas which they believe are inherent in teacher education. For one of these dilemmas, that of mastery versus emphasis (pp. 377-378), they note that "teacher educators are under constant pressure to expand the curriculum to cover more content and skills" (p. 383) and that this pressure includes issues related to multiculturalism. In recognizing that there is a literature on the ethnocultural diversity facing teachers, and that each ethnocultural group has different learning styles which require different teaching styles, the issue of how an empirical base to support the theoretical suggestions may be developed is one which should be addressed.

The theoretical knowledge about preparing teachers to be effective in a variety of ethnocultural environments exists (e.g., Banks, 1993; Irvine & York, 1995; Sleeter & Grant, 1988). There remains the need to collect empirical data to confirm the theoretical base and to determine the existence of such activities in teacher preparation programs. In recognizing the idiosyncratic nature of a teacher's experience this study attempts, as Zeichner (1983) recommended, to "go beyond each unique experience to develop generalizations which transcend the specific situations studied" (p. 34). It does so through an examination of one general and five specific research questions.

## The General Problem and Research Questions

The general research problem addressed in the study was: To what extent can it be determined whether teachers who have completed preservice and inservice teacher education programs with an ethnocultural emphasis perform more effectively with ethnoculturally diverse and ethnoculturally different students in their classrooms than teachers who had no similar emphasis in their preparatory programs?

The general research problem was addressed through a series of specific research questions. These were as follows:

1. To what extent does ethnocultural diversity exist in those schools which are included in the study?
2. To what extent do the problems experienced by beginning teachers in ethnoculturally diverse classrooms differ from those experienced by beginning teachers generally?
3. To what extent did the beginning teachers in the selected schools receive an ethnocultural focus in their preservice teacher education program, and

To what extent do they believe that an ethnocultural focus in their preservice teacher education programs would serve to prepare them to be effective teachers of ethnoculturally diverse and ethnoculturally different student populations?

4. To what extent did the beginning teachers in the selected schools receive an ethnocultural focus in their inservice teacher education program, and

To what extent do these teachers believe that an ethnocultural focus in their inservice teacher education programs would serve to prepare them to be effective teachers of ethnoculturally diverse and ethnoculturally different student populations?

5. In order to improve the teaching of ethnoculturally diverse student populations, and of students who are ethnoculturally different from the teacher, what preparatory practices might be facilitated and enhanced at both the school system and university levels of teacher preparation?

These questions were addressed through an examination of data collected as responses to a questionnaire and in subsequent interviews.

## Summary

This chapter introduces the topic of the study, which is the ethnocultural preparation of teachers. Spindler's (1987) concept of sociocultural contextualization was introduced and the definitions for terms used in the study have been provided. A discussion of the significance of the study, and a description of both the general and specific research questions which guided the study, conclude the chapter.

I have demonstrated that there is a literature on the ethnocultural diversity facing teachers in their classrooms, and that each ethnocultural group has different learning styles which require different teaching styles. This understanding informs the study. The study was further brought into focus by the comments of Zeichner (1992):

> In the last few years the teacher education literature has emphasized the importance of helping student teachers become more reflective about their teaching in the practicum, of preparing supervisors to foster reflective teaching, and of methods like story telling, journal writing, and action research. We are doing a much better job of enabling student teachers to understand themselves and their commitments and to develop habits of monitoring and improving their teaching. Still, little has been written about how this enlightened practice is helping us to prepare teachers to educate children in culturally diverse and

> democratic societies. . . . If teachers are not educated to teach children of any social origin and background, then teacher educators are failing. (p. 302)

The study addresses an area of research which has seldom been explored and, as a result, has produced findings which have theoretical, practical, and research implications for teacher preparation programs and for the ongoing professional development of teachers.

## Organization of the Dissertation

The literature related to this topic is reviewed in chapter II, and the research questions which derive from the literature are explained. The research questions provided the focus for the study and helped to determine how an empirical base to support the theoretical suggestions could be developed. The methods by which the study was conducted are described and discussed in chapter III.

The findings of the study are presented in chapters IV through VII, each of which addresses one of the specific research questions. In chapter IV, demographic descriptions of the respondents are provided and the issue of ethnocultural diversity in Western Canadian schools is addressed. In chapter V, data relating to the problems which respondents reported experiencing in ethnoculturally diverse classrooms are presented and compared with the problems reported by beginning teachers in the study generally. In chapter VI, information relating to the actual and preferred presence of an ethnocultural focus in the preservice training of teachers are presented and discussed. In chapter VII, findings relating to the actual and preferred provision of supportive experiences in the initial inservice experiences of teachers are presented and discussed. In both chapter VI and chapter VII, as appropriate, a number of preparatory practices which might facilitate the preparation of teachers for ethnocultural diversity are presented and discussed.

The dissertation concludes with chapter VIII, which provides an overview of the study and a summary of the findings. In this chapter the theoretical, practical, and research implications of the study are presented and a concluding statement is made. A list of references and three appendices complete the study.

# CHAPTER II

# REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

In this chapter the salient literature concerned with the ethnocultural preparation of teachers is reviewed. In the first part of the chapter I discuss the different types of ethnocultural groups which exist in contemporary Canada, an avowed multicultural society. In the second part I describe the need for an ethnoculturally cognizant teaching force and explore the continuum of teacher preparation. In the third part I examine the two independent variables of teacher education and teacher experience, and discuss the various subsets identified within each variable. In the fourth part of the chapter I present the method of determining teacher effectiveness which was used in the study. The chapter concludes with a summary of the review of literature and the presentation of a synthesis of the preceding sections within the context of the experiences of teachers generally. This discussion culminates in the presentation of a conceptual framework for the study.

## Ethnocultural Groups

In the first section of this chapter I describe the different types of ethnocultural groups which exist in a multicultural society. The need for an ethnoculturally cognizant teaching force is then described and defended. As previously discussed, this study views ethnocultural identification in ethnic, linguistic, social class, economic, gender, family structure, and geopolitical terms, under the general rubric of ethnocultural diversity. Shakeshaft (1989) argues that gender is a cultural term (p. 328), as opposed to sex which is a biological reference, and this suggestion is followed in this report.

Amadio, Varese, and Picon (1987) subscribe to the notion that there are only two cultural groups in the world. In this view, often referred to as a neo-Marxist perspective, global society is polarized between the modern capitalist sector (usually consisting of people from a white, rich, class-laden, ex-colonial power) and the marginal sector which comprises of people who are indigenous, poor, ethnic and tribal. This position has many supporters, and forms the reality as experienced by First Nations people in Canada. In many cases this is also the reality experienced by new immigrant groups to Canada. For other minority groups, for example the voluntary immigrants described by Ogbu (1993), marginalization has come from relocation. In

all situations, the ethnocultural group which suffers marginalization does so due to the inability of that group to access the same levels of economic or social power and prestige as the majority elite.

In contrast van Vuuren (1992) identified historical, political, geographical and cultural ties as being at the core of an ethnic identity. Ethnicity becomes the sum of all other perspectives. Irrespective of present place, a web of prior knowledge and experiences is constructed to identify one's own ethnocultural identity. This is an cultural perspective which broadens the concept of ethnicity beyond mere skin colour or language. This perspective does not, however, reflect many contemporary sociopolitical realities.

The present study accepts the cultural perspective of van Vuuren (1992) as being a necessary component of any analysis. Such a perspective is then grounded within the political theory of a socialist or neo-Marxist paradigm. This perspective, which has become known as 'critical theory' analysis, provides a useful vehicle for exploring minority education.

## Selected Theories Concerning Minority Education

It has long been observed that many children who come from those groups which are ethnoculturally different from the majority culture are at a disadvantage in the formal school system. When compared with majority culture children, they generally fail to do as well in school. This situation arises whether success is measured in terms of academic success, entry to post-secondary institutions, participation by family members, or any other criterion. The two most widely accepted theoretical claims for this disparity are cultural deficit theory and cultural difference theory.

### Cultural Deficit Theory

When Rivera (1992) examined schooling in a remote area of Puerto Rico, she claimed that the existence of an environment of cultural deprivation contributed to the academic delay and lack of educational experiences observed among children who attended isolated rural schools on the island. This claim reflected what Deutsch (1967), Reissman (1962), and others have referred to as the cultural deficit or cultural deprivation explanation for low academic achievement.

In essence, cultural deficit theory rationalizes student failure as resulting from the home environment of the child. It is assumed that the child who does not 'benefit' from the lifestyle and material goods supply of a white, nuclear, and economically self-sufficient family must automatically be underprivileged. Such a child can therefore not

be expected to be successful in school. As Jacob and Jordan (1993) recount (pp. 4-5), this position has since been rejected because it tends to reflect an ethnocentric and middle class position that non-standard speech patterns and work habits are somehow inferior to those of the majority culture.

### Cultural Difference Theory

Erickson (1993) has developed what he terms the cultural difference approach, preferring to consider different patterns of language, behaviour, and so forth as being simply different, rather than innately better or worse. He accepts that "differences between majority and minority cultures in interaction, linguistic, and cognitive styles can lead to conflicts between child and school that interfere with effective education" (p. 8). For beginning teachers it would indeed be useful to be able to recognize these differences, and to accept them as having validity in their own right, rather than pursuing a narrow, standardized ideal which probably does not exist anywhere outside their own imaginations. Cultural difference theory attempts to place no value on one cultural background over another. It is assumed that each culture is different from, but equal to, all other cultures.

## Majority and Minority Culture

There are many references to the culturally different in schools (e.g., Bowman, 1970; Dianda, 1991; Mortenson & Netusil, 1976; Pusch, 1979; Rodrigues, 1979; Schmitt, 1973). In the following section of the chapter I discuss the ways in which these cultural groups may be differentiated.

### Majority Culture

The majority culture in Canada is generally considered to consist of the white, middle class, economically self-sufficient population who tend to live in either the suburbs or the geographic hinterland adjacent to a larger urban centre. Euro-Canadian is one term used to describe this group; Anglo is another. The group is not homogeneous but also includes what Ogbu (1993) refers to as "autonomous minorities," groups which are culturally different but otherwise similar in appearance (e.g., Mormons, Jews). Within the context of publicly funded education these autonomous minority groups sometimes receive services different from other subgroups.

These services are often concerned with linguistic identity, for example the government funded Gaelic language schools in Sydney, Australia (Grassby, 1983). Although Smolicz (1991) declared that funding and support for "the teaching of

community languages throughout the educational system remained rather half-hearted" (p. 43) the fact remains that these groups did receive services over and above those provided to other members of the majority group.

In Canada the same situation exists with respect to French Immersion programs and Ukrainian language schools, for example. It is difficult to describe a homogeneous Canadian majority culture in purely linguistic terms, for the majority class is comprised of many different language groups. To use van Vuuren's (1992) terms, the majority group in Canada has historical, cultural, and geographical ties to Europe and political ties to the established Liberal, New Democratic, and Progressive Conservative Parties, with some contemporary movement to the Reform Party. It also, from a socialist or neo-Marxist perspective, has control over the means of accessing financial and political power.

**Minority Cultures**

The minority cultures are easily described as being those not of the majority, but this is rather simplistic. Afele-Fa'amuli (1992) has described how learning occurs within a large, complex, geopolitical, cultural, and socioeconomic context which influences how and what individuals learn. This contextualization of learning has led Ogbu (1993) to identify two other classes of minority cultural groupings.

**The domestic minority**. These are those groups which, by virtue of conquest and/or colonization, have become a minority group within their own indigenous borders. Ogbu (1993) has classified these groups as forming an involuntary or castelike minority, for they have not chosen to be a minority group in their country.

In the North American context the domestic minority consists of three groups. These ethnocultural groups have roots which either precede the European conquest of the 1400s and 1500s or were established in the period immediately following the conquest. The first group is represented by the American Indian or First Nations populations (e.g., Blair, 1967; Comptroller General, 1971; Harty, 1976; Mathieson, 1974; U. S. Office of Education, 1976). The second group consists of the African American or Black population (e.g., Blair, 1967; Darton & Linville, 1977; Johnson & Simons, 1972; Quoyeser, 1980), and the third is that group variously referred to as the Hispanic, or Chicano, or Latino population (e.g., Hinkle, Tipton, & Tutchings, 1979; Pablano, 1973; Quoyeser, 1980; Rodriguez, 1979).

**The immigrant minority**. These are those groups which have chosen to leave their indigenous homeland and travel to another country. On the west coast, these

populations are predominantly south-east Asian in origin. Other representative groups are from the Pacific Islands, Central and South America, Africa, Europe, and the Indian sub-continent. There have been few studies of the experiences of these groups, although Al-Qazzaz (1976) described the experiences of Arabs in North America and Rosen (1971) discussed how Hawaiians reacted to moves to the mainland.

**The Need for an Ethnoculturally Cognizant Teaching Force**

Teachers must recognize that there is, as Roth (1992) claimed, a "need to discuss the nation's ethnic and cultural diversity" (p. 5). Teachers who do not have what Sikkema and Niyekawa (1987) termed an active understanding of ethnocultural differences often find it difficult to relate to students who are not of their own ethnicity or language.

In urban situations, according to Lomotey and Swanson (1990), many new teachers express "attitudes and comments [which] frequently cause discomfort, fright, and confusion among the students [in inner-city schools]" (p. 69). They do not set out to cause such distress. Rather, as Corson (1991) has explained, current policies which recognize the rights of minority children "do not mesh easily with the training and philosophies of many teachers" (p. 9). As a result the majority of teachers are not prepared to work with students who are ethnoculturally different from themselves or for the realities of an ethnoculturally diverse classroom.

Szasz (1991) emphasized the need for ethnocultural sensitivity in all teachers, irrespective of their place of work, although the Ontario Task Force (1976), Thomson (1978), and Warnica (1986) focused more on teachers of Canadian First Nations students. A number of writers, from Turner and Rushton (1974) through Stewart (1979) to Leavitt (1992), Spring (1994) and, in a Canadian context, Sheehan (1992), have argued that there is a need for teachers to be prepared for work in ethnoculturally diverse classrooms. This position was rejected by Stone (1981, cited in Tomlinson, 1981, p. 67) and, albeit less emphatically, by Amodeo, Martin, and Reece (1983), whose studies determined that effective teaching practice was effective regardless of ethnocultural context. In light of the great volume of research which describes the idiosyncratic nature and ethnocultural contextuality of many learning styles, such a position appears difficult to defend.

**An International Review**

Afele-Fa'amuli (1992) comments on the fact that learning is not simply something that occurs in the classroom, devoid of influence from the wider geopolitical, cultural and socioeconomic context. This point is reinforced by van Vuuren's (1992) observation that historical, cultural, geographical and political ties are what form the core or centre of an ethnic identity. To the difficulties which arise from a recognition of the wider context of education, already complex, should be added the multiethnic dimension of an ethnoculturally diverse student population. This mix serves to make an already complex situation even more complex. In his discussions of educational policy development Clune (1991) reported that "there has been an almost total failure of detailed design of how to deal with student heterogeneity" (p. 131). The issue of effective teaching in ethnoculturally diverse classrooms with high levels of student heterogeneity is also relevant in many different jurisdictions outside Canada.

**United States of America**. In an American context Reed (1993) has noted that "perhaps the most critical issue in education today concerns the increased need for multicultural education in the nation's schools and increased responsibility of teacher educators to teach in culturally diverse classrooms" (p. 27). In a recent study, Tavares (1992) argues that the high drop out rate among black youth in urban American schools could be reduced if schools were more willing and able to adjust so as to meet the needs of all students, not just those of the white middle class.

**Puerto Rico**. Tavares' (1992) conclusions were supported by Candelaria (1992), who in her study of grade two students in Puerto Rico reports the problems faced by monolingual and monocultural teachers who are working with bilingual and bicultural students as the justification for a bilingual social studies program. Such a program, however, might not be sufficient to offset the academic delay which Rivera (1992) blames on the external environment of poverty and cultural deprivation.

**Brazil**. There are many instances where a Frierean methodology has been adopted in the hopes of liberating the minority population from the power of the majority culture. Such projects attempt to overcome the climate of poverty and cultural deprivation noted by Rivera (1992) in her Puerto Rican study. According to Chakoff (1989), however, such goals are not always met and there is some evidence in Brazil that such projects become, in practice, assimilative rather than emancipatory.

**Central America**. The Frierean notions of freedom from a colonizing power are also reported by Amadio, Varese, and Picon (1987). Their study of indigenous

education throughout Central America is predicated on the perceived polarization of society between the modern capitalist sector (the 'haves') and the marginal sector (the 'have nots') of indigenous, poor, and ethnic peoples.

The education of indigenous peoples is further hampered by their linguistic diversity. As only two of the fourteen nations in South America are monolingual (Hornberger, 1991), this presents problems in terms of the development of curricula. Although Amadio, Varese, and Picon's (1987) modern capitalists tend to be members of the colonizing class, and thus privy to the economic resources required for an effective education system, this is not the case for the members of the marginal sectors of society.

**Malaysia**. The impact of the home and social environment on the rate of academic development of the child, as mentioned by Rivera (1992), is also noted by Razali (1992). Indeed, Razali's study would indicate that there are many factors which work integratively in facilitating second language acquisition. In his study of English language acquisition in Malaysia, Razali concluded that those factors which reinforced the development of bilingualism among middle and upper class students actually suppressed such development among children of the lower socioeconomic class.

**New Zealand**. As earlier mentioned, Corson (1993) described the difficulties faced by monolingual white teachers in New Zealand schools who were required to introduce a curriculum which focused on Maori culture and language. The fact that teachers were not properly prepared for, or aware of, Maori culture resulted in the programs being "desultory, unattractive and even miseducative . . . [due to] the forced imposition of contact with a minority culture already too little appreciated or understood" (p. 48).

**Commentary**

Hannaway and Talbert (1993), in a study of effective rural schools, concluded that their research "clearly calls for . . . a research strategy that recognizes the vastly different social and organizational contexts" (pp. 181-182) within which schools operate. Sarason, Davidson, and Blatt (1986, cited in Fullan & Stiegelbauer, 1991) asked, "what is the relationship between the preparation of teachers and the realities they experience when they embark on their careers? That question is as unstudied today - as superficially discussed today - as in previous decades" (p. 291). It appears that the diverse ethnocultural contexts within which schools operate are also worthy of research and that the study of this topic will go some way towards exploring the

relationship between the realities experienced by beginning teachers and the preparation they received in their training program.

In accepting that there is a need for ethnoculturally sensitive teachers who can deliver effective teaching in ethnoculturally diverse classrooms, then the goal of ethnoculturally prepared teachers can be established as being valid and significant. From this position we can then work back from an ideal future, when student learning in ethnoculturally diverse and minority classrooms is as effective as that in majority culture classrooms, and develop the processes and procedures which will allow this goal to be realized. This method, using the concept which Elmore (1983) called "backward mapping" (p. 361), will allow effective teaching strategies to be identified and taught to preservice teachers.

## The Teaching Continuum

The preparation of teachers is an ongoing process, a continuum which extends both before and beyond the formal preservice component. Indeed there are some countries, for example Hong Kong (Cooke & Pang, 1991) and Papua New Guinea (Api Maha, personal communication, March 3, 1994), which for a number of reasons allow untrained personnel to teach in the classroom. The studies reviewed by Roth (1986), however, indicate that "those who have teacher education are better prepared to teach" (p. 27) than those who have not had any teacher education.

### Teacher Education Programs for Minority Groups

North American efforts to address the need for trained teachers of minority groups have resulted in teacher education programs which are specially designed for members of those groups. Three types of program are commonly found. The first are programs which attempt to provide specialized courses within the context of the regular teacher education program through on-campus delivery. The second set of programs focuses on the training of specific minority groups through off-campus, or community-based, delivery. The third group are those programs which have an institutional affiliation but which are, to all intents and purposes, independent and self-governing. A brief introduction to each set of programs is provided below.

**On-campus teacher education programs for minority groups.** These have existed for many years throughout both the United States and Canada. Where they remain in operation, these programs exist as independent programs or departments within the context of the regular teacher education program.

Some of the American institutions which have offered such programs are Northern Arizona University (Comptroller General, 1971; U. S. Department of Education, 1990; Williams, Vervelde, & Fallows, 1991), Arizona State University (Paulsen & Wilson, 1974; Sekaquaptewa, 1970), Humboldt State College (Bennett, 1987), Indiana University (Mahan, 1977, 1981), and the University of Hawaii (Rosen, 1971).

Within Canada similar programs have been offered through the Elementary Education Program (Whittaker, 1986) and the Native Indian Teacher Education Program (NITEP) at the University of British Columbia (Kirkness & More, 1981; Sturgess, 1984), the Indian and Métis Project for Careers in Teacher Education (IMPACTE) at Brandon University (Loughton, 1974), the Intercultural Education Program at the University of Alberta (Kirman, 1969), the North American Teacher Education program (NATE) at the University of Lethbridge (Thomson, 1978) and the Indian and Northern Education Program (INEP) at the University of Saskatchewan (Cecil King, personal communication, May 1991). Such programs have also been offered at other institutions, for example the University of New Brunswick (Owston, 1978) and the University of Calgary (Moore-Eyman, 1981).

**Off-campus teacher education programs for minority groups**. These are specifically those which have been developed to meet the needs of Native American groups. As such they have tended to be located in areas with large Native populations. In the United States these programs have included the Alaska Rural Teacher Training Corps (Gartner, 1974), the Dine Teacher Corps Project (Wilson & Salas, 1978) of Arizona, and similar programs in New Mexico (All Indian Pueblo Council, 1980; Amodeo & Kelley, 1984).

Although a few similar programs do exist in eastern Canada, for example the joint Kahnawake and University of McGill project (U. S. Department of Education, 1990), most are or were located in the west and north. The Morning Star project, which was operated by the University of Alberta at the Blue Quills reserve near St. Paul (Moore-Eyman, 1981; Sloan, 1981), was an example of such a program with a strong community base, as is the contemporary Kw'atindee Bino Community TEP (Dogrib Divisional Board of Education, 1991), a program associated with Arctic College and the University of Saskatchewan.

**University affiliated but independent teacher education programs for minority groups**. Other programs have a strong institutional affiliation and yet are established as self governing entities. These include the Indian Teacher Education

Program (ITEP) at the University of Saskatchewan (Orest Marowski, personal communication, March 1992), and the Brandon University Teacher Education Program (BUNTEP) at Brandon University (Paulet, 1990; Robertson & Loughton, 1976).

The Northern Teacher Education Program (NORTEP) at La Ronge, Saskatchewan (Carnegie, 1991), is an example of a community based program with a strong institutional affiliation to two institutions, the University of Saskatchewan and the University of Regina. Such arrangements are not without their own political problems. Issues of governance and policy, course content and structure, academic standards and applicability of assessment practices arise and must be addressed (Jeff Orr, personal communication, September 1995). In developing community-based teacher education programs for their regions, both the Sahtu Divisional Board of Education (Mike Campbell, personal communication, June 1995) and the Fond du Lac First Nation (Matthew Yooya, personal communication, February 1995), have attempted to emulate the NORTEP delivery model while rejecting the concept of dual affiliation.

**Personal Qualities of Teachers**

According to Covert (1986), the personal qualities that teachers bring to their profession are important indicators of attitudes and competencies during the first year of teaching. This position is supported by Cropley and McLeod (1986), who question whether all teachers can be equally effective or whether there are certain personal characteristics of teachers which can be used to predict future success and which can be identified prior to their entry into a teacher education program. While recognizing the importance of these personal qualities to future professional success, this study was restricted to an exploration of the role played by teacher education and teacher experience in the preparation of teachers to be effective educators in ethnoculturally diverse classrooms.

**Monocultural Teachers and Ethnoculturally Diverse Students**

Recent research in the United States (e.g., Grant & Secada, 1990; Zimpher, 1988 [cited in Fullan & Stiegelbauer, 1991, p. 303] ) has indicated that the majority of teachers, both employed and in preservice training, are in fact white, middle class, monocultural, and monolingual females. Lomax (1973) found similar patterns in England. There appears to be a paucity of such research in Canada, but an informal survey of the researchers' Educational Administration 401 class, a senior undergraduate teacher education course, supports the hypothesis that the Canadian experience will likely be similar to the American one. Of the 27 students in this class of final year

students, 19 were female (including two who were members of a visible minority group) and eight (all Anglo) were male. A similar informal survey of the 38 elementary B.Ed. students at St. Francis Xavier University, Nova Scotia, found that 33 were female (including four who were members of visible minority groups) and five (all Anglo) were male.

This contrasts with the demographic situation in many of our classrooms, where First Nations students mix with a myriad of immigrant peoples to produce an ethnoculturally diverse pupil population. Almost a quarter of a century ago Gregorovich (1972), in a list which subsumed all Asian peoples as "oriental" and excluded any reference to African, South American, or Central American countries, listed 59 ethnic groups in Ontario alone. This diversity has continued to increase over the years.

It therefore appears that in Canada, an avowed multicultural society, there exists a need to prepare a primarily monocultural and monolingual teaching force to work with an increasingly ethnoculturally diverse, or at least ethnoculturally different, student population. Zeichner (1992) extended the concept of teacher sensitivity beyond cultural difference to be inclusive of social and economic origins, and emphatically stated that "if teachers are not educated to teach children of any social origin and background, then teacher educators are failing" (p. 302). Violato (1989), reflecting on the future of the Canadian education system, noted that many beginning teachers consider their teacher training to be "pointless, uninteresting", and to "not prepare them for the harsh aspects of life in the schools" (p. 46). This is particularly true for beginning teachers who find themselves employed in rural or isolated schools, with all the special problems that these environments present. This position is supported by Covert, Williams, and Kennedy (1991) in their review of the perceived needs of beginning teachers in Newfoundland, many of whom were forced to accept rural positions as no others were available.

Borys, Wilgosh, Lefebvre, Kisilevich, Samiroden, Olson, and Ware (1991), in their description of a collaborative practicum model developed at the University of Alberta, introduced the topic by noting that "there is a strong need to prepare teachers who are willing and able to teach in rural settings" (p. 4). In Western Canada especially, rural schools not only have the documented problems of multi-grade classrooms, preparing extensive numbers of lesson plans, lesser access to resources, and so forth, but also often have the added situation of a number of ethnoculturally

different students. This reality has had a small effect on teaching training programs and deserves to be the subject of greater research. Landon (1988), in a review of the field from a linguistic perspective, found that "in the past decade . . . the rhetoric of teacher education has changed. From a monocultural and broadly assimilationist position, there has been a shift . . . to multiculturalism and anti-racism" (p. 56). Unfortunately there is no consensus on what multiculturalism means.

**Understandings of Multiculturalism**

Indeed the whole focus on multiculturalism has different connotations in different parts of the world. In the United Kingdom, according to Epstein (1993), a multicultural school is one with a significant population of non-white students, especially either West Indians or Pakistanis who have been born in the UK (pp. 144-145). In the United States a multicultural school also serves a significant population of non-white students. These might be African-Americans, often referred to as "blacks" (Darton & Linville, 1977), or Mexican-Americans, often referred to as "Chicanos" (Rodriguez, 1979) or "Latinos" (Mahan, 1977). There is some reference to American Indian groups (e.g., Lomowaima, 1995; Mahan, 1981) but this tends to be limited in scope. Of even more limited scope is reference to those of Asian Pacific (Pang, 1995), Arabic (Al-Qazzaz, 1976), or other backgrounds representative of what Ogbu (1993) has called "volunteer immigrant" groups.

In Australia, a multicultural school is also one with a significant population of non-white students, especially Aborigines or Pacific Islanders (Allan & Hill, 1995; Harris, 1990). In Holland, such a school is one with a significant population of students from ex-colonies such as the Indonesian islands but also including children from north African and Turkish immigrant families, a group Yungbluth (1991) has generically termed "blacks." In Papua New Guinea both domestic and expatriate schools serve multicultural student populations at the national and international high schools (Api Maha, personal communication, April 19, 1995). The domestic schools serve the 770 plus linguistic groups found within Papua New Guinea, while the international schools serve some Papua New Guinean children as well as those from a variety of nations whose parents are working, often on contract, within the country.

A degree of uncertainty exists not only in the varying definitions of multiculturalism found throughout the world but also in the usage of the term itself. The literature contains a variety of references to multicultural education, cross-cultural education, inter-cultural education, and so forth. These terms appear to have a certain fluidity of

definition, in that their usage by advocates often has specific meanings which are limited to an individual's understanding of the term in question. In the past, multiculturalism was considered by many to be a term which encompassed the multi-ethnic nature of contemporary North American society. Harker (1981) takes this idea further, arguing that multicultural schools only exist as a result of a political decision, in a multicultural society, and that where different ethnic groups share economic institutions but keep the non-economic aspects of their lives separate then the correct term should be multiethnic.

In recent times, as noted earlier, many authors have defined multiculturalism to further a radical political agenda (e.g., Nieto, 1992; Sleeter, 1989). DeFaveri (1988) observes that although the word implies that many cultures can be maintained, the true meaning is that ethnic identity can be maintained, along with selected cultural patterns which are symbolic expressions of that identity. Sleeter (1995), in her review of recent literature, found that current distinctions in the field are being made between multicultural and antiracist education. DeFaveri (1988) continues his critique of multiculturalism as a positive force in education by noting:

> When multicultural education means giving the old the right to transmit a culture which restricts the opportunities of the young, it becomes a reactionary ideology; on those occasions when it means giving the young a genuine opportunity to becoming educated, it may be genuinely liberating. (p. 5)

In the earlier literature, multicultural education was sometimes viewed as resulting from the tensions between different socio-economic classes in society. As Kneller (1965) observed:

> The school's middle-class culture sets the lower-class child at a disadvantage in innumerable ways. The language of the school is unfamiliar to him. His textbooks, too, appeal to middle-class attitudes, especially that of ambition. . . . He is not at ease with his teachers, who dress, talk, and think differently and appreciate different things. . . . The very procedures of the school may violate the canons to which he is accustomed. (pp. 128-129)

Over time the emphasis appears to have changed from socio-economic class to ethnicity as a reason for concern. Hopkinson (1986), for example, reported that the teachers in her Alberta study "were not professionally equipped to accommodate and utilize the cultural and linguistic differences which children from different ethno-cultures brought to their classrooms" (pp. 253-254). Others have attempted to combine issues of class, ethnicity and language. From a Saskatchewan perspective Lingard (1989, p. 122) identified the five components of multicultural education as being the teaching of English as a second language, Indian and Métis education, heritage languages education, social equity, and a multicultural curriculum. Perhaps the most comprehensive definition in the literature is that provided by Hoopes and Pusch (1979), who state:

> Multicultural education is a structured process designed to foster understanding, acceptance, and constructive relations among people of many different cultures. . . . It stresses cultural, ethnic and racial, in addition to, linguistic differences. It is often broadened to include socio-economic differences (urban, rural, age/youth, worker/middle class), professional differences (doctor/nurse), and religious differences. (p. 4)

Other writers use the term cross-cultural rather than multicultural. To Sikkema and Niyekawa (1987), for example, "at the heart of cross-cultural learning is the process of coming to grips with differences and learning to cope with ambiguity, the ultimate goal being the ability to function comfortably and effectively in a new culture" (p. 35). Barnhardt (1982) uses the term differently. Reflecting on a series of papers which discuss issues in northern education, he observes:

> The issues discussed here are cross-cultural in their origin, in the sense that they arise out of the coming together of two different cultural systems -- one reflected in the western institutional structure of the school, and the other reflected in the fabric of life in Alaskan Native communities. (p. v)

To others, such a 'coming together' is better described as the development of an intercultural perspective. Leman (1991) describes this as "learning to live together in a complex, multicultural society" (p. 126). These skills are important to many North

American authors, for example Tanner (1993), who notes that such a perspective is necessary because "today almost one-third of pupils are minorities, principally from Latin America and Asia" (p. 293).

Hoopes and Pusch (1979) argued that intercultural and cross-cultural are synonymous terms. In their opinion:

> Both 'intercultural' and 'cross-cultural' refer to interaction, communication and other processes (conceptual analysis, education, the implementation of public policy, etc.) which involve people or entities from two or more different cultures. There has been some effort to limit 'intercultural' to that which is interactive between cultures and 'cross-cultural' to that which is comparative or conceptual, but the distinction doesn't hold. (p. 6)

Within this study the word ethnocultural, as previously defined, is the term of choice. However, when citing or discussing the works of others, the term or terms used by those authors is maintained. This is not a pedantic matter but rather one of expediency.

### A Canadian Perspective

In Canada, multiculturalism is a government-sponsored and government-supported state of mind. As Lynch, Modgil and Modgil (1992) recounted, accompanying the Charter of Rights and Freedoms is "a national strategy on multiculturalism, embracing race relations and comprising legislation recognizing the multiculturalism of Canada as one of its basic norm-generating characteristics" (p. 3). Ray (1990) believed that "because of the political appeal of multiculturalism, both provincial and municipal governments have supported versions of the [federal] policy" (p. 49). As a result, teachers are expected to have many skills (Kitching, 1991) which enable them to incorporate the precepts of multiculturalism throughout their classes. If such a strategy is a national goal, protected under Canadian law, then the preparation of teachers who have the ability to recognize all ethnocultural groups equally, and the skills to teach each appropriately, would presumably be an integral part of the teacher education process.

## Ethnocultural Diversity in Canadian Schools

Generally speaking, there are four representative types of schools found in Canada. Two of these are in the public sector and two are in the non-public sector.

**Public Sector Schools**

In the public sector, one representative type is an ethnoculturally diverse school which serves a variety of domestic and immigrant minority groups. Although one group might be more numerous than any other, none have an absolute numerical advantage within the school. These schools are generally found in places, such as certain areas within the inner cities, where a number of different ethnocultural groups have come together. These groups have often been displaced, for economic, social, or political reasons, from their original places or countries of residence.

A second representative type is a predominantly ethnoculturally homogeneous school. There are two variations of this type. The first, which serve the majority, white, middle class population, are usually found in suburban or small rural town environments. These schools may have some representation from one or more minority groups but basically exist to serve the aspirations of the middle class and to maintain the status quo. Those minority groups which are represented in this setting are usually an established immigrant minority group which has moved out of the inner city or a domestic minority group which travels in from an adjacent community.

A second variation is the predominantly ethnoculturally homogeneous school which serves a minority population (either domestic or immigrant) in a location where that group is, in fact, numerically the majority. These schools are usually found in rural, often isolated, localities and may have some majority group representation in the form of children of nurses, teachers, RCMP officers, and trading store managers. Examples of the schools which serve an immigrant minority group are those in Hutterite communities, while those which serve domestic minorities are the federal and Band controlled schools on Indian reserves and in Inuit communities.

**Non-public Sector Schools**

A representative type found in the non-public sector is the private school. The majority of these are predominantly ethnoculturally homogeneous schools, although they may be established to meet the needs of different cultural or religious groups and are not necessarily white, or middle-class, in their focus.

In the non-public sector, a second representative type is the predominantly ethnoculturally homogeneous school serving a minority population. This is similar to those found in the public sector.

## Teachers

The majority of Canadian preservice teacher education programs do not overtly prepare new teachers for these specific environments. Although some introductory courses may discuss the different types of school organization in Canada, it is assumed that teachers are being prepared for a potential career in any or all of these settings. Therefore, if they are to be effective in contemporary Canadian classrooms, preservice teachers need to be exposed to a broad spectrum of ethnoculturally specific ways of learning and be made aware of ethnoculturally appropriate strategies of teaching. It follows that the impact that these changes will have on both preservice and inservice teacher preparation programs is an area deserving further study.

This is not simply a Canadian problem. Roth (1992) noted that

> there is a deep recognition of the fact that America is becoming more diverse and the instructional work force must reflect this. The nature of the teacher education curriculum should also be designed to prepare all teachers for the realities of the diverse classrooms. (p. 7)

As most of the research on this topic is American in origin, one of the contributions of this study is an indication of the actual ethnocultural diversity in Canadian classrooms.

Avery and Walker (1993) commented that "there is evidence that most teachers have limited knowledge about cultural and linguistic groups different from their own . . . and there is little indication that the predominantly white teaching force is prepared at either the preservice or inservice level to meet the needs of today's students" (p. 27).

Although Gonzalez (1993) argues that there is a need to address the issue of teacher diversity through the active recruitment of non-white minority students into the teaching force, Grant and Secada (1990) found that the numbers of such minority candidates in preservice training programs are low and seem to be dropping. In the absence of sufficient numbers of minority teachers, it therefore behooves teacher educators to prepare candidates from the majority culture to be effective teachers in ethnoculturally diverse environments.

## Teacher Education and Teacher Experience

In this part of the chapter I examine the two independent variables of teacher education and teacher experience. The various subsets which were identified within each variable are then presented and discussed.

## Teacher Education

The dyadic subsets within this variable are (a) the ethnocultural knowledge required of teachers in ethnoculturally diverse classrooms and (b) the courses and practica which constitute the teacher education programs.

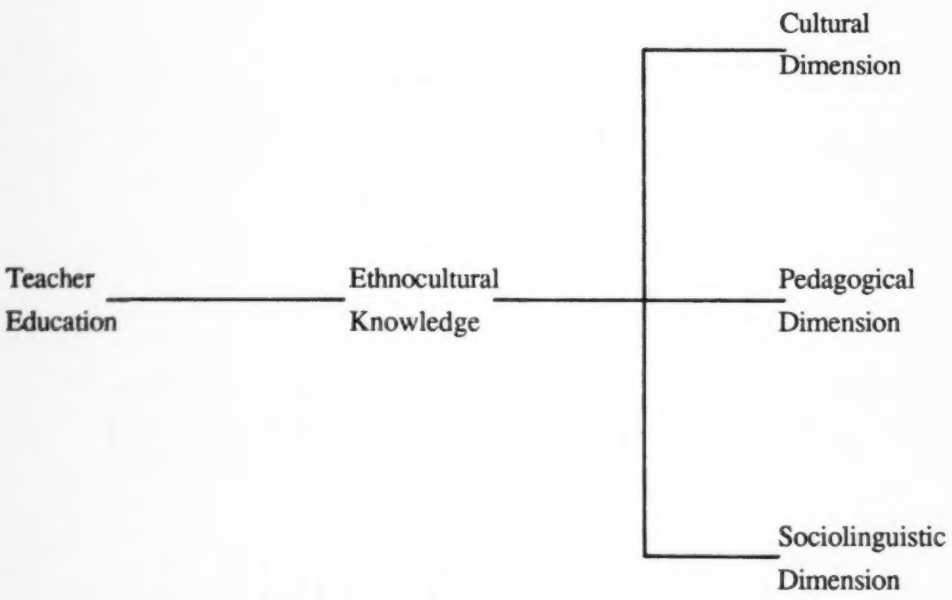
### Ethnocultural Knowledge

A review of the literature has identified three dimensions to the ethnocultural knowledge required of teachers who are, or will be, working with students from ethnoculturally diverse backgrounds. I have termed these as the cultural, pedagogical, and sociolinguistic dimensions of ethnocultural knowledge (see Figure 2.1). These dimensions of ethnocultural knowledge are found, to varying degrees, in most teacher education programs and are part of the ongoing professional education of teachers.

The first, and most prevalent, is the cultural dimension. This is what educators often think of when they refer to ethnocultural knowledge. The idea that an awareness of ethnicity is useful is both important and relevant to teacher effectiveness. It is not, however, the only aspect of ethnocultural knowledge. A teacher should also recognize the pedagogical and sociolinguistic dimensions of this variable. These two areas have received too little emphasis in the literature and, because they are limited to specialized courses within teacher education programs, are seldom explored by preservice teachers.

**The cultural dimension.** This is the first dimension of ethnocultural knowledge. There have been many calls for the cultural preparation of teachers over the past two decades (e.g., Collins & Hanson, 1992; Landes, 1965; Leavitt, 1992; Leskiw & Girhiny, 1992; Myers & Myers, 1990; Sheehan, 1992; Stewart, 1979; Turner & Rushton, 1974). Fenton and Nancarrow (1986) and Werner, Connors, Aoki, and Dahlie (1977) provided general support for the position that courses should be ethnic in name, content, and perspective and this support was reflected in experiments like the Cultural Literacy Laboratory (University of Arizona, 1973). The U.S. Office of Education (1976) expected that such courses would provide effective training for those who intended to work with ethnoculturally diverse students and with those students who were ethnoculturally different from the teacher. Szasz (1991) and Thomson (1978) believed that such courses would allow teachers to develop ethnocultural sensitivity while the Ontario Task Force (1976) on Aboriginal education, in a position supported by Dickason (1992) and Warnica (1986), recommended that Native culture, history, and philosophy courses be mandatory for all students who will become teachers of Native children. Jacob and Jordan (1993) have recently claimed

Figure 2.1
Dimensions of Ethnocultural Knowledge



that preservice teachers should be required to develop an understanding of the genetic, cultural deficit, and status attainment explanations of student achievement through what Washburn (1981) has called a comprehension of cultural pluralism.

Butterfield (1985) noted that the ability to adapt practice so as to reflect culturally appropriate curricula and skills is most important. Similarly, the U. S. Department of Education (1990) claimed that the development of cultural awareness and knowledge should be a requirement for all teachers, a position supported by Zeichner (1992). In an examination of problems facing teacher educators in Israel, Yair (1993) showed how Sephardic Jews had difficulty in adopting and absorbing individualized western abstract thought processes because they were used to the emotional thinking and dependence on authority associated with their own culture. The ethnoculturally prepared teacher will be aware of these distinctions and will use the appropriate teaching style with different categories of learner.

The ethnocultural experience in preservice teacher education programs should not be one centred in the tacit absorption of information gleaned from textbooks. There are efforts to incorporate new technology into the learning of cultural knowledge. For example a recent report (Tribes go high tech, 1994) noted that "interactive videodisc and hypertext technology [was used in New Mexico schools] to help students learn Zuñi language and culture" (p. 49). There is no reason why teacher education programs cannot similarly access modern technology to teach ethnocultural differences to preservice teachers.

**The pedagogical dimension**. This is the second dimension of cultural knowledge. Sikkema and Niyekawa (1987) noted that "we often assume that people of another culture or subculture see, feel, and think as we do. . . . Much misunderstanding is caused by the assumption that our own reactions are universal" (p. 2), a position supported by Ramsey (1987). Sikkema and Niyekawa (1987) believed that these assumptions often lead to the misinterpretation of the verbal and non-verbal cues that assist us to predict responses. This in turn leads us to what Corson (1991) argued is the reinforcement of negative stereotypes which occurs when we do not receive the reaction we expect. Ramsey (1987) noted that "many studies have demonstrated the overt and covert ways that teachers' responses vary according to the race and gender of students. These behaviours include offering supportive versus critical attention, giving eye contact, and making non-verbal gestures" (p. 41). Teachers who are not aware of the ethnocultural diversity of communication cues can

make terrible mistakes in their interpretation of student responses. As Sikkema and Niyekawa (1987) discussed, "until we learn the cues of the other culture, we find ourselves in an unstructured situation, not knowing what to do or expect. This unsettling experience is called 'culture shock'" (p. 5).

It is important, then, that all teachers be aware of what Corson (1991) has termed the "language and dialect repertoires" of their students (p. 12). They must accept the validity of different dialects, for example, understand how these differences can have an effect on reading and writing skills, and adjust their assessment processes accordingly. Although, as Grassby (1983) pointed out, English is often the "language of upward mobility" (p. 9) in many societies, it is the responsibility of the teacher to also value and validate non-standard variations of the language. In this, as Ramsey (1987) affirms, the teacher is the "critical variable" (p. 40) in the teaching process. To recognize that not all dialectical variations are the same, and that different means of communication are preferred and valued by different ethnocultural groups, is crucial for educators. What works with one group may be ineffective with another, as found by Lomotey and Swanson (1990) in their study of effective rural and urban American schools. They note that "despite their success in teaching the basic skills to poor white populations, their [rural schools] record with poor African-American and Hispanic populations is abysmal" (p. 79).

There have been many cases where individual interventions seem to have had an impact on minority group student achievement. One means of establishing effective literacy programs in Hispanic communities has been to combine parental and student learning, for example through the "literature backpack" approach described by Busco (1991). Another is Candelaria's (1992) belief that monolingual teachers should be provided with bilingual teachers' guides in order to properly understand the needs of Hispanic students, an approach she took in Puerto Rico.

In order to meet the needs of minority groups it is imperative that teachers recognize the cultural idiosyncrasies of learning and implement teaching strategies which facilitate the learning process. In his study of education in the Kingdom of Tonga, Forté (1993) noted the importance of memory in cultural discourse and highlighted the usefulness of memorizing as a teaching strategy. These findings were supported by those of Afele-Fa'amuli (1992), who found that the predominantly oral culture of American Samoa led to non-indigenous knowledge being acquired more effectively when the teacher used discussion and demonstration strategies rather than lecturing.

The isolated reserves of Canadian First Nations, if mapped against the ocean of the majority culture, appear similar to islands mapped against the Pacific. This similarity goes beyond geographical isolation. The work of Forté (1993) in Tonga and Afele-Fa'amuli (1992) in American Samoa has implications for teachers in the oral cultures of many North American First Nations. Such an awareness of ethnoculturally appropriate pedagogy allows the teacher to plan each lesson in a way which targets the appropriate learning style of the student. Afele-Fa'amuli (1992) also found that learning occurred best in small groups of different aged people from neighbouring households, a finding which might be considered when a school organizes its student population into classes.

This research needs to be discussed so that teachers are made aware of strategies which might increase their effectiveness in the classroom. The present study makes a contribution to the literature by examining which, if any, of these strategies have been part of the preparation or practice of teachers in Canada.

**The sociolinguistic dimension**. This is the third dimension of cultural knowledge. There is a broad literature on the linguistic development of minority learners, a literature which is generally outside the scope of this dissertation. A brief review of some of the salient material will, however, place the need for the ethnocultural preparation of teachers within the broader context of sociolinguistic development.

Teachers can learn to understand that nuances of discourse are not consistent across ethnocultural boundaries. Such an understanding might lessen conflicts between students and teachers. For example, Eslamirasekh (1992) noted that Persian speakers are significantly more direct when making requests compared to American students. This trait can be perceived as rudeness by a teacher who is not aware of the ethnoculturally preferred style of discourse. Such a perception can lead, in turn, to conflict and anger.

Smith (1968) spoke quite generally about the need for teachers to be aware of specific English as a Second Language (ESL) teaching strategies. Smith (1979) argued that teachers in the Northwest Territories must have ESL teaching skills, as did MacDiarmid (1974) and Pulu (1975) with respect to the Yupik people of Alaska. Spolsky (1975) and Vorih and Rosier (1978) made similar arguments in a Navajo context. It is apparent that teachers who work primarily with children for whom English is a second language or dialect should be aware of such strategies.

Recent research by Vogt, Jordan, and Tharp (1993) indicates that ESL strategies are not always transferable and should be grounded in the sociocultural context of the community. Those strategies and techniques which they found to be successful in the Hawaiian schools were not equally successful when transplanted to Navajo schools in Arizona (p. 60). Although preservice programs might be able to provide novice teachers with an understanding of general ESL strategies, more specific information should also be provided at the local level.

Research by Leith and Slentz (1989) on what teaching strategies were considered successful in Northern Manitoba schools supports Grassby's (1983) contention that "literacy follows the oral communication process" (p. 11). Rodriguez (1979) recommended that the procedures and techniques of literacy must be preceded by an understanding of the importance of non-standard dialogue if language learning is to be effective. Darton and Linville (1977), Landon (1988), and Stairs (1988), among others, claimed that there should be compulsory language training for all preservice teachers. Other authors agree that such training is required for preservice teachers but also believe that effective inservice programs must be developed so that all teachers, experienced as well as novice, might learn to understand and deal with language problems (e.g., Burnaby, 1980; Burnaby, Elson, Appelt, & Holt, 1982; Mohawk, 1985; Smith, 1972). Inservice programs might also have the effect of sensitizing teachers to the sociolinguistic realities of their own communities. This, in turn, might allow them to develop ethnoculturally specific strategies instead of relying on general, and generalizable, ideas.

Researchers in cross-cultural education, such as Barnhardt (1982), Irvine and York (1995), Kleinfeld (1974, 1975), Pablano (1973), and Tafoya (1981), among others, recommended that preservice teachers should be trained in a variety of instructional or teaching styles. Other strategies might include the use of interactive computer and videodisc programs, as described by Sponder and Schall (1990), the cultural journals developed by Temple and Gillett (1984), or the drama-based activities Foreman (1991) used to facilitate minority student learning.

In another body of literature writers such as Foster and Beeman (1986), Johnson, Amundsen, and Parrett (1983), and Johnson and Ramirez (1990) dealt with the education of American Indian children who have special educational needs. The Congress of the United States (1992) issued a report on the best ways to teach those who are deaf while Gajar (1985) and Ramirez and Tippeconnic (1979) provided similar

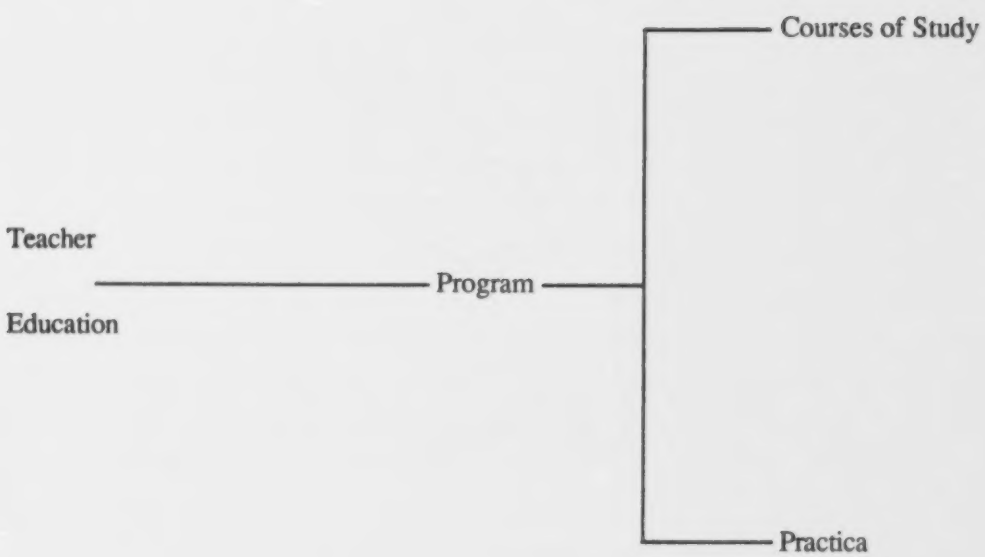
strategies for teachers of the handicapped. Amodeo, Martin, and Reece (1983) offered suggestions for the effective teaching of First Nations students with physical disabilities while McCloud (1981) and Tonemah (1992) have provided recommendations on teaching strategies for teachers of gifted Native American students. Teachers should also be aware of the work of Underwood and Brunner (1991) with students who have been designated as having Limited English Proficiency, and that of Anziano and Terminello (1993) with respect to a specialized program such as Head Start. It is true that much of this knowledge can be provided to preservice teachers as part of an expanded program of studies. In and of itself, however, passive learning is insufficient as a means of true ethnocultural preparation.

Sikkema and Niyekawa (1987) differentiated between a passive understanding of cultural difference and an active awareness of an ethnoculturally different individual or group. They note that whereas a passive understanding of ethnocultural difference can be learned through books, film, travel, art, and so forth, "for those who will be interacting with people of other cultures . . . [in situations] where more than superficial communication is required, such passive understanding is far from sufficient" (p. 3). For teachers in ethnoculturally diverse classrooms it is important that they move beyond intellectual and rational understanding to "the development at gut level of an attitude of acceptance, respect, and tolerance of cultural differences" (p. 4). Such an active understanding cannot be learned only in the classrooms of a teacher education program. It must also be forged and reinforced through experiential learning at the school site.

**Program**

I believe it to be important that preservice teachers, through their teacher education program, develop an awareness of ethnocultural diversity. Such a program can be conceptualized as having two major component parts, the in-university courses of study and the in-school practice teaching experiences (see Figure 2.2). For preservice teachers to understand what Hilliard (as cited in Sikkema & Niyekawa, 1987) meant when he wrote that all school subjects "must be freed from the monocultural ethnocentric focus that characterizes most standard course work" (p. 9) would be a great step forward in teacher education. This understanding cannot develop in a vacuum. As Ramsey (1987) pointed out, "to begin to understand the roles that race, culture, and class play in perceptions of the world, it is helpful to explore experiences and reactions in a safe and supportive environment" (p. 43). Teacher educators should strive to ensure that their classes provide such an environment for preservice teachers.

Figure 2.2
Dimensions of a Teacher Education Program



Roth (1992) claims that we are experiencing a paradigm shift in teacher education. He states that the two paradigms which are vying for supremacy, those of the reductionists and the reconstructionists, both "emanate from a common base, the decaying and impotent condition of teacher education" (p. 3) today. In accepting that teacher education is in need of reconstruction, the inclusion of a pervasive ethnocultural focus would assist in the building of a new and relevant program. A comprehensive teacher education program which placed education within a sociocultural context would help prepare the next generation of teachers for the realities of working with children from an ethnoculturally diverse community. Such a program would consist of appropriate courses of study as well as extended and varied practica, or student teaching experiences.

**The courses of study**. These are the most visible part of a teacher preparation program and tend to reflect that knowledge which society deems is important for new teachers to possess. Roth (1986) has noted that all teacher education programs in the United States are being significantly affected by new teacher certification requirements. In his recent work he noted that whereas instructional domains used to be the bases for observing student teachers, these are now being superseded by issues of teacher knowledge such as those identified by the Project 30 proposals (Roth, 1992). One of these areas is the extent to which a beginning teacher has knowledge of the "multicultural, international and other human perspectives" (p. 5) of education. In Canada this type of requirement has not yet become the norm.

This is evident from a review of the most recent academic calendars from each of the two main universities in Western Canada. The education courses described in the University of Alberta (1995) calendar include five which have an apparent ethnocultural focus. Only one of these, Cross-cultural studies in education, is a compulsory course and then only for those students for whom intercultural education is their declared elementary focus area or secondary minor teaching subject.

A similar situation appears to exist at the University of Saskatchewan (1995). Of the 16 courses which have an apparent ethnocultural focus, nine are elective courses offered through the Indian Education program. Of the seven general education courses only one, First Nations and cross-cultural education: An introduction, is a compulsory course for all preservice teachers. There is a growing awareness, however, that the development of a knowledge of perspectives other than the Eurocentric must be part of a teacher education program.

There have been a number of general discussions of courses related to the preparation of teachers for ethnoculturally diverse classrooms (e.g., U. S. Department of Education, 1990; Handscombe, 1988; Kirman, 1969; Landon, 1988; Stairs, 1988). Other writers have considered the need for teacher educators to identify those teachers who have cross-cultural interests so that specific program options might be made available to them (e.g., Mahan, 1977, 1981; Mortenson & Netusil, 1976; Noley, 1991). I believe that all courses of teacher preparation should be grounded in a perspective of ethnocultural awareness, and that all neophyte teachers should be prepared to teach in ethnoculturally diverse situations. To do this, teachers need to be provided with the skills necessary to utilize ethnocultural criteria in assessing school and community populations, adapt curricula to reflect local conditions, and vary teaching strategies so that they better reflect and meet the demands of a variety of learning styles. These skills can be taught as part of the preservice program of study.

**Practica**. As an integral part of the preservice teacher education program, practica are the means by which the newly acquired knowledge of preservice teachers can be practised and assessed in the more practical environment of a classroom. The work of Adams (1993), Belanger (1983), and Tardif (1984) are examples of a growing literature dealing with the practicum. To many writers, however, it appears that the value of practica must be questioned. A recent study by Wideen, Mayer-Smith, and Moon (1993) found that in many cases the student teaching experience was so devastating that little or no learning took place. Recent practica participants at three different teacher education programs have shared similar comments with this author (Réne Carriere, personal communication, September 1991; Leslie Hudson, personal communication, July 1993; Norma Mercredi, personal communication, October 1992). A reliance on the skills of the cooperating teacher, the minimal respect offered student teachers by their students, and a general lack of control or influence over the process, serve to minimize the effectiveness of the practicum.

In a study of 97 beginning teachers from Newfoundland's Memorial University, Covert (1986) found that the teaching environment they encountered in the first year was more important than any of the preservice experiences measured by the study. This highlights the need for effective orientation and induction practices, so that the novice teacher is introduced not just to the profession but also to the particular school in which initial employment occurs. Although much contemporary work on beginning teachers has examined the transitional problems of teachers, these studies tend to be

specific to the professional knowledge of teachers (e.g., Craig, 1992; Hewitson, 1975; Rovegno, 1993), their subject areas (Hawke, 1980), the age or grade placement of the students (Turner, 1984), or the teacher's country of employment (Cheng, 1986; Samuda, 1966). Other studies (e.g., Megay-Nespoli, 1993) have provided a practical "how-to" text for neophytes but must, by definition, be quite general in both scope and focus.

What Grant and Secada (1990) have identified as the need to develop a diverse teaching population has not really been addressed through the structure, planning and duration of practica experiences. Burdin and Reagan (1970) argued that the effective training of preservice teachers should facilitate the development of appropriate social, psychological, and historical attitudes. For this to occur, the link between philosophy and pedagogy described by Regan and Hannah (1993) must be established. The provision of single courses with an ethnocultural focus, or of units of study within such courses, are unlikely to suffice. In order that an ethnocultural focus be developed in preservice teacher education, a conscious and deliberate effort must be made to incorporate related issues in a pervasive manner, throughout the curriculum.

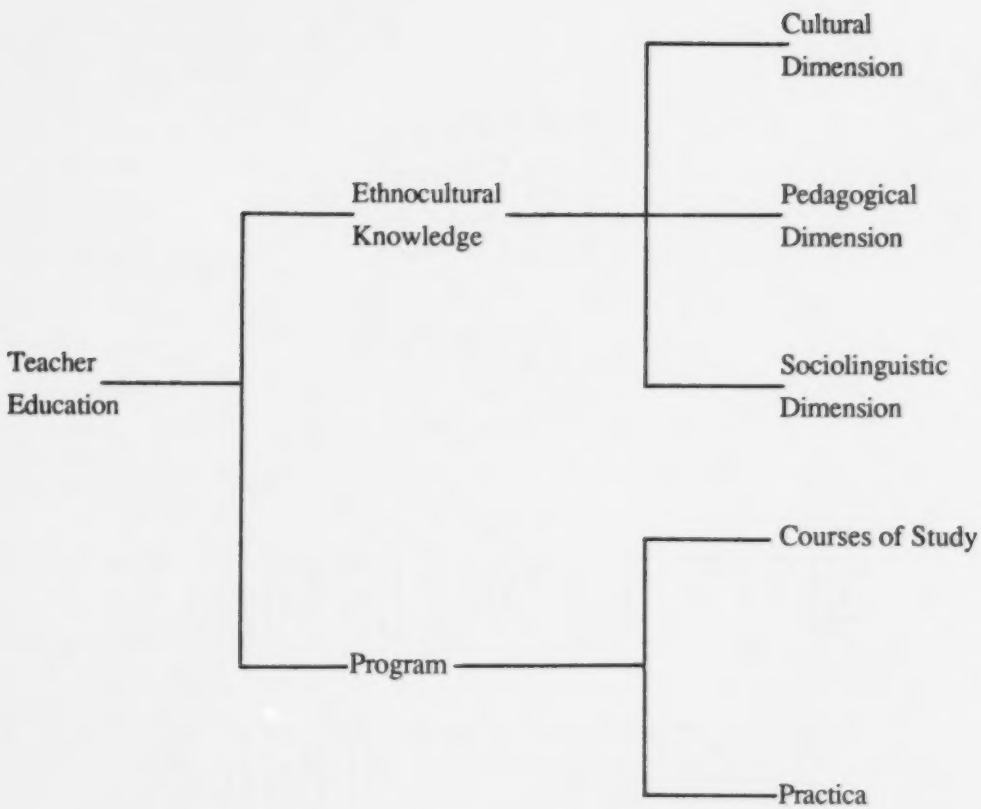
**Commentary**

Although the early findings of a study by Amodeo, Martin, and Reece (1982) found that there is no real need for special preparation of teachers of ethnoculturally different students, such a finding is very much in the minority. Most writers accept that there is a need for teacher education programs, through courses of study and practicum assignments, to prepare teachers to be effective with ethnoculturally diverse students. This may involve assisting trainees to overcome their fear of working with ethnoculturally different students (e.g., Darton & Linville, 1977; Mahan, 1977; Noley, 1991; Smolkin, Suina, & Mercado, 1995; Warnica, 1986). Alternatively, it may involve the restructuring of courses of study so as to better reflect ethnocultural realities (e.g., LaCelle-Peterson & VanFossen, 1995; Ladson-Billings, 1995).

Teacher education is conceptualized as consisting of dyadic subsets. These subsets, of ethnocultural knowledge and program, are the sum of various dimensions identified from the literature (see Figure 2.3). The literature suggests that these dimensions of teacher education can, and should, have an ethnocultural focus. The layers of socially ingrained and institutionalized ethnocentrism must be peeled away and discarded if teachers are to respond equitably, equally, and effectively with students from a variety of ethnocultural backgrounds. One aspect of this study was to explore the extent to

Figure 2.3

A Diagrammatic View of Teacher Education



which the teachers who responded to the survey had experienced such an ethnocultural focus in their teacher education program.

## Teaching Experience

The second independent variable is the experience of the teacher, particularly in the beginning years of the career. This transitional stage is fraught with tension, as the neophyte makes the move from in front of to behind the teacher's desk. In discussing this variable, the subsets under consideration are the recruitment and initiation of teachers.

### Recruitment

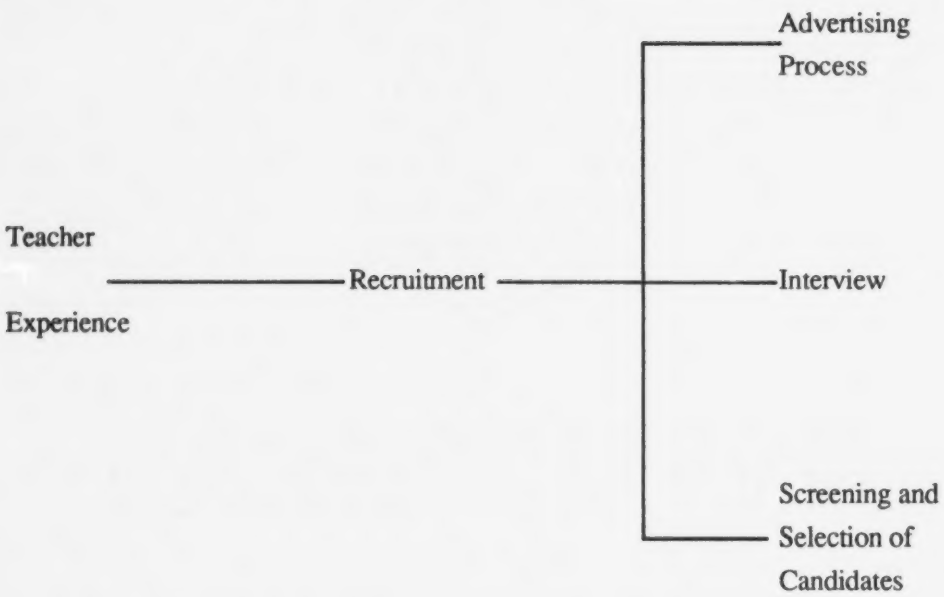
The recruitment process extends from the advertising of a position until a teacher is hired. The process includes a number of different stages, each of which might be adapted to better facilitate the employment of ethnoculturally prepared teachers (see Figure 2.4).

**The advertising process**. This is the first part of recruitment. Mahan (1977) and Smith (1979) have shown that there is an obvious need to include special skills and ethnocultural information in job advertisements, so that potential candidates can decide not to apply for positions for which they are neither qualified nor prepared. This self-selection might serve to reduce the high turnover of teachers, many of whom enter an ethnoculturally different environment and subsequently find themselves unable to cope. The resulting loss of new teachers is a problem in many locations, from Northern Canada (Jeff Finell, personal communication, February 1995) to Hawaii (Stacey Marlowe, personal communication, March 1995).

Carnegie, Goddard, and Heidt (1992), Inkster (1992), and Mahan (1977), observed that it is also advisable for schools to keep records of retention patterns of graduates from different institutions so that advertising can be targeted at those institutions which have a strong track record of providing effective and ethnoculturally literate teachers. This information can also be included in the advertisement as it serves to provide prospective applicants with an opportunity to contact previous graduates for further information.

It is through the advertisement that teachers are first informed of a position vacancy. The scant attention paid to this process by recruiters might serve to exacerbate staffing problems. In providing clear, concise, and ethnoculturally succinct information to potential recruits, schools might be able to minimize many problems relating to low levels of teacher retention.

Figure 2.4
Dimensions of Recruitment



**The interview**. The interviewing of prospective teachers is the second stage in the recruitment process. It is beneficial for all concerned if the interview can be held in the school where the successful candidates will be employed. Such a situation is not always possible. As the U. S. Department of Education (1990) has observed, many schools serving minority groups are located in remote areas. This poses problems due to funding restrictions, which minimize the capacity of the school to bring potential members of staff long distances for on-site interviews. As a result, interviews may be conducted over the telephone or may be held in central locations away from the community.

A second concern, noted by Hillabrant, Romano, Stang, and Charleston (1991) in their submission to a Senate task force on Native education, is the poor training of community members who are conducting the interviews. In many Canadian First Nations schools, locally elected school committees control the hiring process. As a result of weak educational practices in the past, few members of such committees have achieved any level of education beyond junior high school. The presence of a school administrator on the hiring committee does not necessarily result in educationally sound decisions. If the administrator allows the community members to fully control the interview, then many pedagogical issues might be left unaddressed. Conversely, if the administrator "shuts out" the community participants, then this can lead to an appearance of "tokenism." This, in turn, can contribute to the development of a difficult atmosphere during the interview itself.

For some schools there might be a problem if the interview team is not aware of ethnocultural issues within the community. Such a lack of awareness might lead to a situation where members of the interview committee are not able to conduct an interview which either reflects those concerns or probes to discern the ethnocultural awareness level of the candidates. The construction of the interview team, and the raising of their awareness of these issues, is key to the subsequent success of the process.

**The screening and selection of candidates**. This is the final stage of the recruitment process. It is at this point that the previous efforts of the recruitment team come to fruition. Although Carnegie (1991), Grant and Secada (1990), and others, have noted that there is a need to select a teacher corps whose demographic composition reflects that of the students in the school, this can be a problematic goal. As Dianda (1991) and Gonzalez (1993) have reported from the American experience, there are

insufficient minority group teachers entering the profession to adequately meet the need. That a number of jurisdictions have recognized the situation and have subsequently offered inducements so that they might meet their demographic targets has only served to penalize the less wealthy and more remote districts. The focus on matching demographic profiles can result in conflict when lesser qualified teachers who do meet certain ethnocultural criteria are hired or when qualified teachers who do not fit the demographic profile are refused employment.

There is no consensus that ethnic compatibility is the key variable for teacher effectiveness. In the field of First Nations education, for example, Noley (1991) was concerned about the low numbers of Aboriginal teachers although Erickson (1993) has developed a cogent argument that the ethnicity of the teacher is irrelevant. Coombs and Boon (1969), in their work on preparing teachers of Alaskan and Lapp children, argued that language was more important than ethnicity and that the primary need was to improve selection procedures so that linguistically compatible teachers were recruited to work with minority children. In either case, the situation is exacerbated by the active targeting of First Nations educators by commercial institutions outside education, who can often offer teachers a different and, perhaps, more lucrative career path.

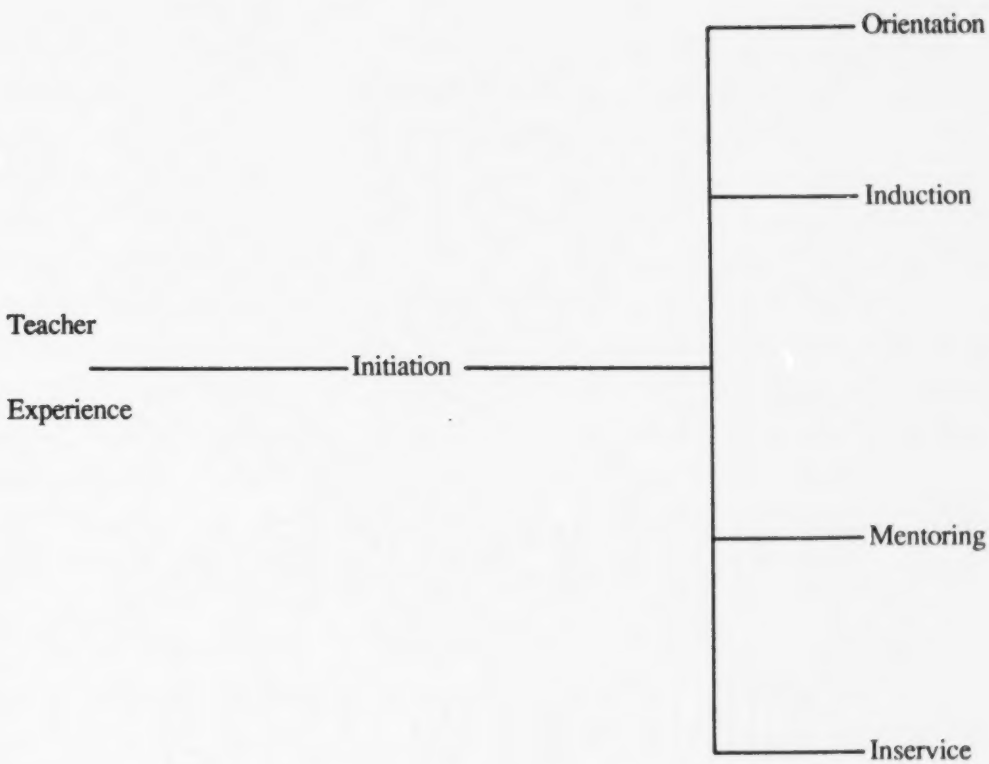
**Initiation**

The initiation period extends from the moment of hire through the early years of teaching. In the literature, four major dimensions of initiation are identified (see Fig. 2.5).

Draper, Fraser, and Taylor (1992) argued that there is an obvious need for teachers to develop an acquaintance with the community context within which they will work. This knowledge can be acquired in a variety of formal and informal ways. A great deal of research indicates that a structured process of teacher familiarization, from early orientation through induction and mentoring to a planned and ongoing inservice component, should be part of every district's efforts to facilitate the entry of new teachers to the system.

One American jurisdiction has made such a program mandatory, with a two year period of supervised teaching being required prior to certification being granted (North Carolina, 1985). The collaborative involvement of the school, university, and teacher ensures that the supervised period combines ongoing professional development with induction to the district. Holdaway, Johnson, Ratsoy, and Friesen (1994) have provided a comprehensive review of the benefits of an internship program within a

Figure 2.5
Dimensions of Initiation



Canadian context. In England a similar idea was suggested by Her Majesty's Inspectorate (Department of Education and Science, 1982), specifically that prior to certification there be a "detailed induction program" (p. 83) in the first year followed by one year of probation. Although fiscal restraints have limited the introduction of such programs, the conceptual foundations are sound and bear further exploration. The four major components of the teacher initiation continuum are described below.

**Orientation.** Orientation is defined as the process by which teachers are first introduced to their new school. This process is often formalized, with a structured agenda developed so as to orientate new members of staff to their professional environment. The literature also suggests ways in which teachers might take control of the orientation agenda and participate in their own learning.

Ramsey (1987) suggested that new teachers should first discover what racial, cultural, and linguistic groups are present in the classroom, and what the proportions of each group are relative to the whole class, a position supported by Corson (1991). If children are present who are linguistically different from the teacher, then the teacher should determine whether or not she, he, or any other member of staff can speak any of those languages. The ability to communicate with students, and their parents, in their home language would appear to be a key means of establishing effective parent-teacher and teacher-student relations.

Teachers might also find it useful to determine the socioeconomic status of the students, as well as the occupations of the primary wage earners, for these are often accurate indicators of societal status. Further, effective teachers will often determine the extent to which media portrayal and general societal stereotyping of these languages and occupations is either positive or negative. It is through such knowledge that a new teacher is able to better comprehend the variety and diversity of children in the classroom. An awareness of the socioeconomic divisions in society, and of the prejudices and stereotypes associated with the various divisions, often helps the new teacher avoid leaping to unfounded conclusions.

Orientation planners such as those employed by the Government of the Northwest Territories (NWT, 1982), together with commentators such as Hillabrant, Romano, Stang, and Charleston (1991), have noted that effective orientation programs must be of a suitable length, not just a few hours. Bergen (1987) observed that such a program should also attempt to sensitize beginning teachers to the community. The involvement of the community representatives is important, as this facilitates what Reyhner (1981)

described as the notion of community members as cultural translators. The program can include both physical and vicarious experiences. Many authors suggest that beginning teachers be required to read and discuss case studies which describe the experiences of others (e.g., Carey & Kleinfeld, 1988; Kleinfeld, 1988; Wolcott, 1984/1967). Others prefer a more participatory approach.

An annual event in many Baffin Island communities is the fall picnic (Goddard, 1990a). Here the whole community travels to a local scenic area and hosts a meal in honour of the school teachers. Sitting around a communal pot of simmering seal meat allows for informal interaction to occur, and for the new teachers to begin the process of learning about the Inuit lifestyle and culture. In diverse school districts, efforts can be made to acquaint all teachers with the more isolated communities. In one northern jurisdiction, the orientation was held in a community accessible only by boat (Goddard, 1992). The 100 or so teachers and support staff, who effectively doubled the local population, spent three days living in tents and attending workshops held under the trees.

**Induction**. This is the continued socialization of the teacher to the school and school system, after the initial period of orientation has been concluded. This is an often neglected area. In their review of international studies on induction policies, Cooke and Pang (1991) found that "few formal induction policies and practices, systematically planned and implemented, existed" (p. 94). As a result, many teachers whose questions had not been answered during the formal orientation were not provided with the opportunity for further discussion and clarification.

Where an induction process does occur, the scope of this activity tends to be quite limited. Barger (1986) and the Educational Research Service (1977) both found that in many jurisdictions little information was provided to new teachers beyond that relating to district policies and practices. Cooke and Pang (1991) discovered that "where provision was made it was normally irregular, fortuitous, and informal" (p. 94). This is unfortunate as planned programs in Ontario have been successful (e.g., McNay & Cole, 1989; Cole & McNay, 1989; Cole, 1990). An opportunity exists for schools to build upon these exemplars and develop their own effective, and beneficial, induction processes.

Chester's (1991) Connecticut study found that the effectiveness of beginning teachers in urban schools was influenced by three specific variables, each of which could be manipulated by the principal. The three variables are opportunities for

collaboration with colleagues, adequate allocation of resources to support new teachers, and the attention of the school and district superordinates. Through the development and implementation of a structured induction program, principals can address these issues and facilitate an increased effectiveness in their new teachers. Hale (1992) found that the provision of release time and the keen interest expressed by principals and administrators contributed to the success of the first year of an Ontario program, a finding supported by Chester (1992) in his second Connecticut study. Such findings suggest that the principal must be a visible and committed participant-supporter of the induction process.

Following their study of new teachers in Northern Ireland, Wilson and D'Arcy (1987) suggested that the probationary year required in that country should include a developed induction program. Szasz (1991) noted that a cultural awareness component is critical to the success of any induction process. Cross-cultural educators such as Cazden and Mahan (1989), Kleinfeld, McDiarmid, Grubis, and Parrett (1983), Mahan (1984), and McCarty and Zepeda (1992), have all recommended that the planners of an induction program should remember that teachers and students have had different cultural and social experiences and that these reflect the ways in which they act, understand, communicate, and generally interact with other people.

It may be that the program described by Girad (1973), which developed along the lines of a five month apprenticeship for new teachers and which also served as an immersion into the culture of northern Quebec, could serve as a model for all ethnoculturally diverse jurisdictions. Schools which serve ethnoculturally diverse student populations should prioritize their resources when establishing such programs. A poorly funded and haphazardly planned induction might serve to diminish, rather than increase, teacher satisfaction and subsequent retention in the school.

**Mentoring**. This is the third part of the initiation process. As Van Thielen (1992) noted, a comprehensive mentoring program is not a duplication of the teacher education program. Rather, it should be a structured process which assists the beginning teacher while reassuring established staff that they and their experiences are valued and respected. The involvement of all staff is key to the success of a mentorship program. Although annual and active participation by all staff need not be mandated, the opportunity to participate must both exist and be known to exist. The isolation of one or more teachers from the process may otherwise lead to staff discontent rather than to the development of shared understandings.

A mentorship program can ease the stresses felt by many beginning teachers during their transition to the profession. Hale (1992) observed that the "buddy program" developed in Scarborough, Ontario arranged for each beginning teacher to be paired with a mentor for the first few months of the school year. As new teachers do not usually have personal knowledge of their colleagues, such planned participation can help ease them into the school and its culture. Such programs continue the process begun with the orientation and induction programs previously described.

**Inservice**. These programs are those planned activities which allow teachers, during and as a part of their employment, to further develop their skills. As Blackburn and Moisan's (1987) review of the European experience has indicated, the increasingly rapid technological, economic, social and cultural changes which are occurring in society mean that teachers are continually being presented with new curricula and the need for new instructional methodologies. As the "information age" continues to grow and expand, so all teachers must be provided with the opportunity to constantly upgrade their levels of knowledge and skills. This need is not restricted to beginning teachers. As declining birthrates and a static teaching staff have limited the employment opportunities for new teachers, so the existing work-force also requires extensive inservice training.

The same situation is developing in Canada. It is imperative that inservice training programs be developed to address issues of changing knowledge and technology. Programs must also be structured so that they reflect our understandings of the rapidly changing ethnocultural composition of the country. Teacher education programs cannot be expected to encompass all ethnocultural variations within their programs, and each individual school board must also take some responsibility for the ethnocultural preparation of teachers. Although it is appropriate that preservice teacher education programs provide their students with an awareness of ethnocultural diversity, and with a *smørgasbörd* of skills and strategies appropriate to that diversity, such programs can only provide knowledge at a surface level.

**Commentary**

A deeper understanding of specific teaching strategies appropriate to particular ethnocultural milieux can only be facilitated at the community level. The idiosyncratic nature of effective inservice programs is not always recognized. There are many jurisdictions which attempt to import inservice programs from other school systems, or to purchase them from commercial enterprises. While such programs might serve as a basis for further development, in and of themselves they are seldom sufficient to meet the needs of a specific school.

The literature suggests that teacher experience can be conceptualized as consisting of dyadic subsets. These subsets of recruitment and initiation are the sum of various dimensions (see Figure 2.6). The literature suggests that these dimensions of teacher experience can, and should, have an ethnocultural focus.

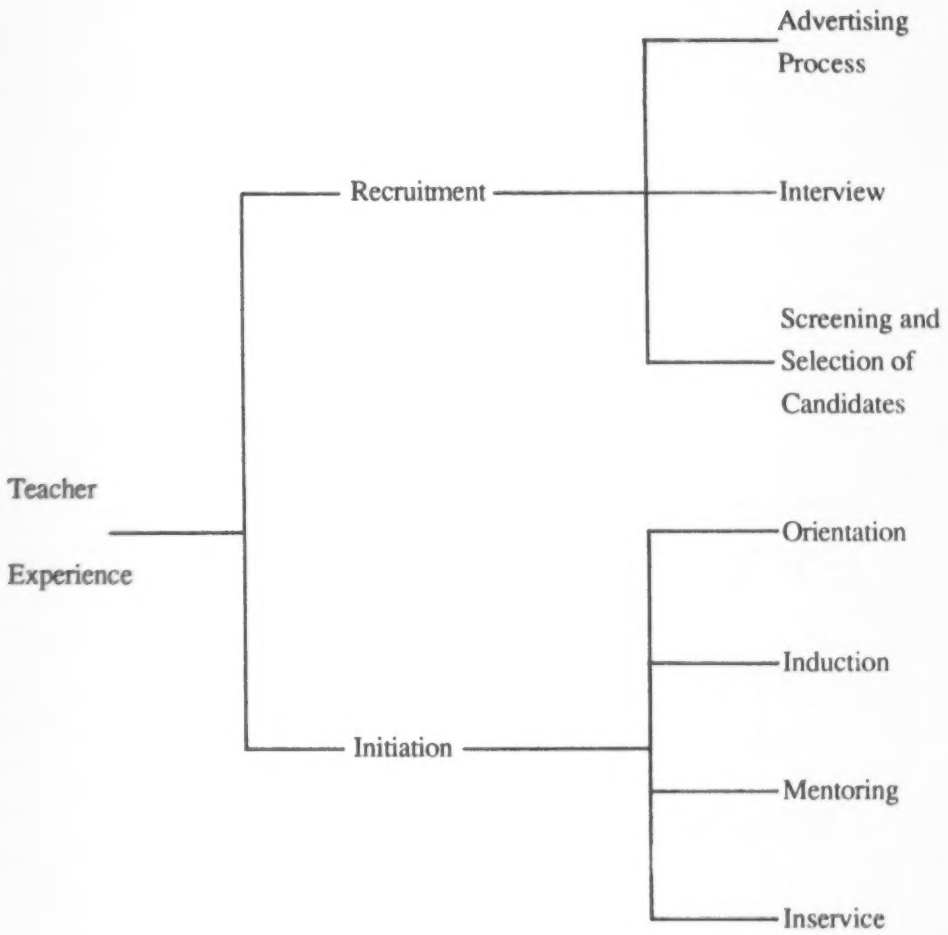
The extent of ethnocultural diversity in Canadian society suggests that idiosyncratic measures are required to meet idiosyncratic needs. There are suggestions, however, that formal preservice programs might offer opportunities for the raising of general levels of awareness vis-a-vis ethnocultural diversity. A second aspect of this study was to explore the extent to which the teachers who responded to the survey had experienced such an ethnocultural focus in their teaching experience.

**Determining Effectiveness**

A study by Cooke and Pang (1991) identified four major problems experienced by first year teachers in Hong Kong (pp. 99-101). These were: dealing with individual differences in learning abilities; the low English standard of learners; dealing with slow learners; and, the low motivation of students to learn. It is apparent that these problems may not be caused by student apathy or ignorance but by inappropriate teaching methods due to a lack of understanding of the pedagogical and sociolinguistic dimensions of cultural pluralism, referred to in this study as ethnocultural diversity. One method of determining the effectiveness of teachers, and the method employed in this study, is by measuring the frequency with which they experienced, or perceived that they had experienced, problems during their first few years in the profession. Those respondents who reported that they experienced fewer problems in the classroom during their initial experiences as a teacher were considered to be more effective teachers than those who reported experiencing more problems.

Lawton (1987) reminds us that "no initial course of teacher preparation, however good, can equip a young teacher for up to forty years in the classroom" (p. 97). There

Figure 2.6
A Diagrammatic View of Teacher Experience



is simply too much to learn, and the culture of the classroom, the school, and indeed society at large, is constantly changing. Sarason, Davidson, and Blatt (1986) have noted that "the question of what the relationship is between the preparation of teachers and the realities they experience when they embark on their careers . . . is as unstudied today . . . as in previous decades" (p. xiv). This study attempts to make a contribution to our knowledge of this aspect of the teaching continuum.

The Casey (1992) study of large California schools found that 11% of probationary teachers were not recommended for continuation after the probationary year. The largest proportion of teachers not recommended for renewal were from junior high schools in rural environments. The teachers whose contracts were renewed were those whom the principal felt were able to maintain classroom control, were considered to be fair, firm, and consistent in their use of appropriate discipline in the classroom, exhibited a positive attitude towards the school and the community, maximized the time the students spent on academic tasks, and exhibited a genuine concern for the students. Avery and Walker (1993) claimed that

> preservice teachers who have not had the opportunity to develop their awareness, knowledge, and skills at working with diverse populations will be inadequately prepared to meet the classrooms of a diverse society, and . . . will continue to maintain low expectations for minority students. (p. 29)

As rural schools tend to meet the needs of a minority clientele with low socioeconomic status, the teaching behaviours preferred by principals must be reinforced through effective preservice and inservice training if teachers are to hold high expectations for student achievement.

Gorman and Pollitt (1992) examined school efficiency in Guatemala and concluded that "multiple factors contribute to a child's educational trajectory, many of which are independent of the child's ability" (p. 533). One of these concerns is that of time available for planning, a concern reflected in the Cooke and Pang (1991) study which found that in September beginning teachers spent "on average 250 minutes per day outside class hours on professional tasks" (p. 95), a commitment which had been reduced to 180 minutes per day by June. In a Manitoba study, Wodlinger (1986), found that both rural and urban teachers experienced problems in the four areas of classroom management, discipline and organization, time management, curriculum

adaptation and organization, and short-term and long-term planning. These issues, together with others raised in the literature, were addressed in the study through the operational questions which formed the survey instrument, as discussed in the following chapter. The operational questions are described in the questionnaire which is appended as Appendix 1 to this research report.

## Conceptual Framework

The study is conceptualized as an analytical and descriptive study which explores and compares the roles played by teacher education and teacher experience in the preparation of teachers to be effective educators in three different regions of Western Canada. Each of these variables is a duality and consists of subsets which were measured through the operational questions incorporated into the questionnaire. The review of literature has explored the relationships between these variables and has suggested an arrangement (see Figure 2.7) by which this relationship might be visualized. As each variable and its component subsets are interdependent, no directionality is ascribed to any of the relationships. Rather, it is understood that a two-way influence exists between each of the components presented in the conceptual framework.

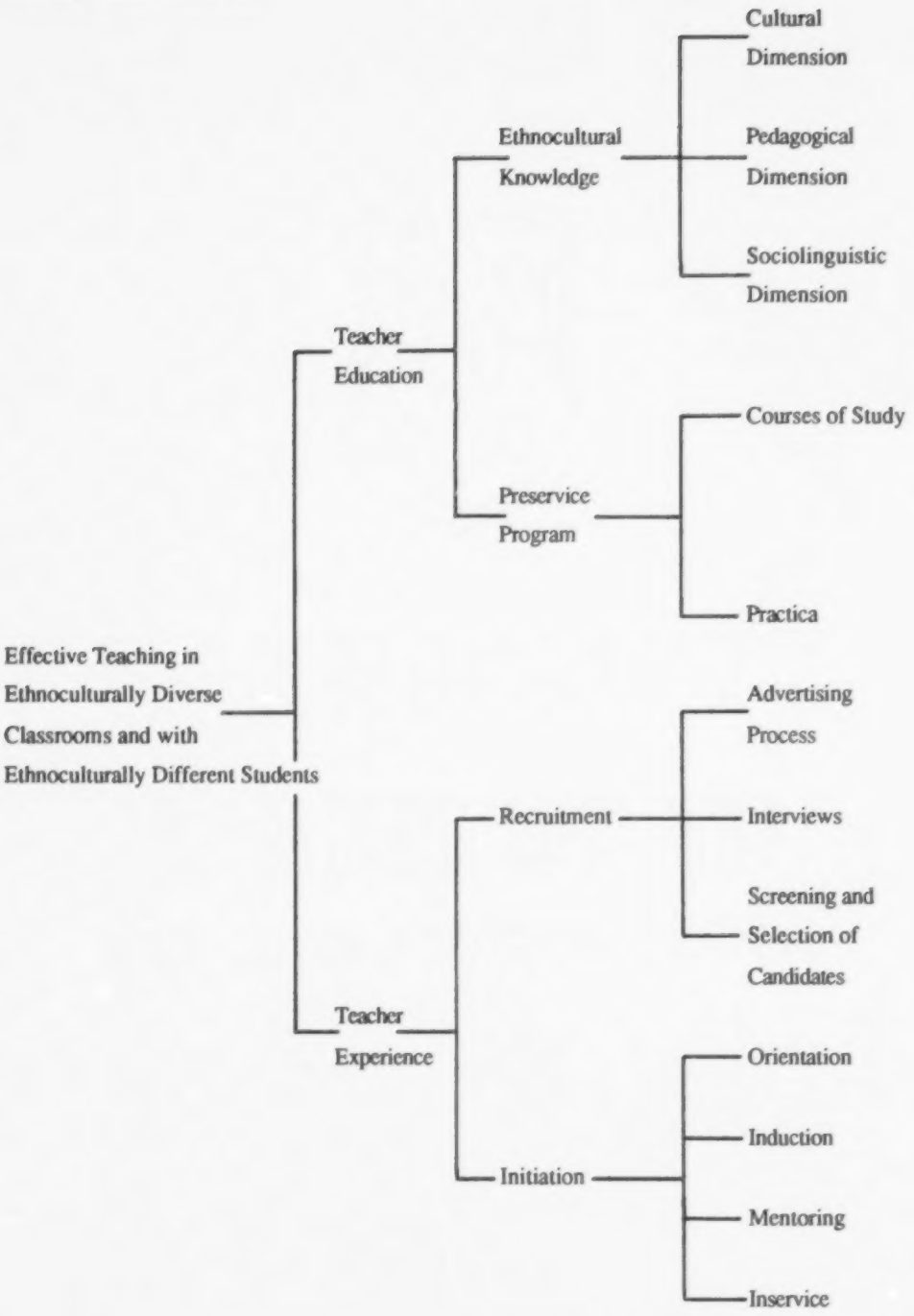
## Summary

Adapting the comments of Manning (1993), the concept of ethnocultural knowledge has been extended beyond that of cultural awareness. The pedagogical and sociolinguistic dimensions of ethnocultural knowledge have been sufficiently defined and clarified for teacher educators to know the course content and field experiences that the prospective educators of ethnoculturally diverse children need.

Fullan and Stiegelbauer (1991) have claimed that "teacher education policy and practice is still in bad shape, lacking coherence . . . and squandering the many pockets of success that are cropping up more and more frequently" (pp. 289-290). The present review is of that literature which is concerned with preservice teacher education programs, the teaching continuum, ethnocultural groups, the need for an ethnoculturally cognizant teaching force, and dimensions of ethnocultural knowledge.

The review indicated that there are many "pockets of success" to be found in the research literature. In such instances it was reported that some teachers and teacher educators were employing methods which appeared to be improving the teaching of ethnoculturally diverse and ethnoculturally different student populations. It remained unclear, however, as to which of these strategies were being taught to preservice

Figure 2.7
Conceptual Framework



teachers and, subsequently, were being practiced in Canadian schools. One purpose of the present study was to determine which, if any, of these strategies were becoming part of the repertoires of Canadian teachers. The methods by which this task was achieved are described in Chapter III.

# CHAPTER III

# RESEARCH METHODS

In this chapter I describe the methods by which the study was conducted. The research paradigm is explained and the research design is presented. An explanation of how the pilot study was conducted is followed by a discussion of the data collection instruments utilized in the study. The methods by which the collected data were analyzed are reported.

Following a discussion of issues of reliability and validity, the limitations, assumptions, and delimitations inherent to the study are presented. This section is followed by a report on how the ethical guidelines of the University of Alberta were met. A summary concludes the chapter.

## The Research Paradigm

The study followed the analytic/descriptive model described by Miklos (1992). The purpose of the study was to explore the extent to which teachers are being prepared to be effective educators in the ethnoculturally diverse classrooms of contemporary Western Canadian schools. To that end the relevant literature was explored and "best practice" recommendations related to the ethnocultural preparation of teachers were identified. The experiences of teachers in three distinct sociogeographical environments were then analyzed and compared with those recommended in the literature.

The information gleaned from the research, when combined with previous theoretical and experiential understandings, provided an insight and comprehension that appeared to be absent from previous research and practice concerned with the ethnocultural preparation of teachers. As such, the study reflected what Rudestam and Newton (1992) described as "an applied focus [drawn from the] life and professional work" (p. 9) of the researcher. The study, as an attempt to create an understanding of the ways in which teachers can be prepared to be effective educators in ethnoculturally diverse classrooms and with ethnoculturally different students, addressed a question which had its genesis in the professional life of the researcher.

As no specific theory exists which can be supported or disproved by the data which emanate from the study, one outcome of the study has been the development, from the collected data, of a theoretical construct. An ex-post facto approach was used to

develop this construct. The initial data were analyzed and then subjected to clarification, confirmation, and further interpretation through the follow-up interviews.

## Research Design

A two stage research design which combined both quantitative and qualitative approaches was used in the study. As Cresswell (1994) and de Landsheere (1988) have observed, this type of design allows the researcher to utilize the strengths of each approach. The methods used included a survey questionnaire which produced statistical data and open-ended, semi-structured interviews which produced narrative data.

In the first stage, a questionnaire developed from the literature was distributed to a randomly selected sample of 450 teachers, 150 from each of three distinct regions. In the second stage, interviews were held with a purposive sample of the respondents to the survey questionnaire. The interviews were semi-structured and sought to confirm those trends, patterns and themes identified by the researcher from the analyses of responses to the questionnaire. The interviews allowed the researcher to develop a deeper understanding of the issues and also provided anecdotal data to supplement the quantitative analysis.

Following the collection of data, the survey responses were subjected to statistical analysis and the interview responses to content analysis. These two types of analysis complemented each other and enhanced the discussion of the findings of the study.

## Population and Samples

The population for the study consisted of teachers employed and located in three distinct sociogeographical regions of Western Canada. The questionnaire was administered to three sample groups from the population, thus providing participants from isolated, rural, and urban schools. Each of the three regions was defined by parameters similar to those established by the U.S. Census Bureau (Pavel, Curtin, Christenson, & Rudes, 1995). The three sociogeographic regions which were identified for the study each also reflect a separate ethnocultural milieu and were predicted to have specific teacher-student relationships.

**Milieu 1**. This region was an urban centre in Alberta consisting of "a large central city . . . with a population greater than or equal to 400,000" (Pavel, Curtin, Christenson, & Rudes, 1995, p. 137) and its immediate hinterland. The school system in this centre serves an ethnoculturally diverse population from a variety of socioeconomic backgrounds. Schools in the community tend to have variable levels of

student transiency, with some schools experiencing much higher transiency rates than others. The dominant teacher-student relationship was predicted to feature ethnoculturally diverse student populations taught by teachers who were ethnoculturally different from the majority of their students.

**Milieu 2**. This region consisted of two rural school districts, one in Alberta and one in Saskatchewan, with both serving rural communities and small towns with populations of less than 100,000. The school systems serve ethnoculturally diverse populations. These populations, however, tend to cluster in ethnoculturally congruent communities separate from each other. The communities tend to have generally high socioeconomic backgrounds with a low level of student transiency. The dominant teacher-student relationship was predicted to feature ethnoculturally homogeneous student populations taught by teachers who were ethnoculturally compatible with the majority of their students.

**Milieu 3**. This consisted of eight band controlled school jurisdictions, some in Alberta and some in Saskatchewan. These were in areas with "no settlement with a population larger than 2500" (Stern, 1994, p. 2) and with no direct road link to the rest of the province. The school systems serve ethnoculturally homogeneous populations from predominantly low socioeconomic backgrounds. The communities tend to have a high level of student transiency, as students and their families move between the reserve and local towns. The dominant teacher-student relationship was predicted to feature ethnoculturally congruent student populations taught by teachers who were ethnoculturally incompatible with the majority of their students.

## The Pilot Study

A pilot study was conducted in May, 1994 (Goddard, 1994). Eighteen people who were not to participate in the full study were invited to participate in the pilot testing of the survey instruments. The participants were selected so as to represent the three sociogeographical milieux which were to be included in the research study. The primary purposes of the pilot study were to (a) provide a 'reality check' on the survey instruments and (b) contribute to the development of the author's skills in research design.

The pilot study also allowed me to address, albeit in a tentative and preliminary fashion, the research questions which would subsequently form the crux of the major study. In the pilot study I therefore began to address research questions which sought to (a) describe the extent to which ethnocultural diversity exists in a number of selected

Western Canadian schools representing three distinct sociogeographic milieux of two provinces; (b) identify the extent to which beginning teachers in the selected schools received preservice education programs which served to prepare them to be effective teachers of ethnoculturally diverse student populations, where these existed; (c) identify the extent to which beginning teachers in the selected schools received supportive initial inservice experiences which served to prepare them to be effective teachers of ethnoculturally diverse student populations, where these existed; (d) explore the extent to which problems facing beginning teachers, as commonly reported in the research literature, were minimized when the teacher had received preservice education programs which served to prepare them to be effective teachers of ethnoculturally diverse student populations, where these existed; (e) explore the extent to which problems facing beginning teachers, as commonly reported in the research literature, were minimized when the teacher had received supportive initial inservice experiences which served to prepare them to be effective teachers of ethnoculturally diverse student populations, where these existed; (f) explore the extent to which the perceived effectiveness of the teachers' preservice education programs affected their perceptions of the effectiveness of the school in which they were currently employed; and (g) explore the extent to which the perceived effectiveness of the teachers' initial inservice experiences affected their perceptions of the effectiveness of the school in which they were currently employed. Subsequently, the research questions for the main study were formulated.

Following Johnson (1988), participants in the pilot study were asked "to comment upon the completeness, appropriateness, and clarity of items, layout and length of all [the] instruments" in the study (p. 99). As Smith (1993) has described, a pilot study is useful as it allows the researcher to:

- explore unforeseen aspects of the data-collection methodology;
- explore potential strengths, weaknesses, and concerns in relation to the proposed methodology;
- gather information related to [the topic of the study]; and
- provide information about the feasibility of the study. (p. 82)

In these ways the pilot study also provided me with the opportunity to increase my own awareness and skills.

The responses to the pilot study were subjected to statistical analysis. It was anticipated that the analyses of the responses to the pilot study might result in revisions being made to the survey instrument. This was in fact the case and the revised questionnaire (see Appendix 1) was subsequently used in the main study.

## Data Collection

The study employed a two stage design to collect data. In the first stage the data were collected by means of a survey questionnaire. This was necessary because in this topic area there is a lack of relevant base information with which to work. In order to produce generalizations regarding the ethnocultural preparation of teachers it is first necessary to collect a wide range of data (Fowler, 1988). There is an efficiency in using a survey instrument to collect these data in that a questionnaire "requires less time, is less expensive, and permits collection of data from a much larger sample" (Gay, 1976, p. 191). The initial survey was drawn from the literature, validated through the opinions of respondents to the pilot study, and then administered to a sample of the larger population.

In the second stage a purposive sample of respondents were interviewed. Data collected through the questionnaire and subsequent interviews were then described and analyzed. The interviews allowed the researcher to select specific findings from the questionnaire analyses and focus special attention upon these areas.

### The Questionnaire

Following an extensive review of the associated literature, the development of the conceptual framework for the study led to the identification of the two variables of teacher education and teacher experience. Each of these variables was further identified as being a duality which consisted of specific subsets. These subsets were then utilized in the questionnaire which was developed by the researcher. The initial draft of the questionnaire was subjected to peer and expert review, and to pilot testing in the field.

**Construction**. Following Best (1981, pp. 176-177), Best and Kahn (1989, pp. 190-191), and Rosier (1988, pp. 108-109), the instrument was constructed in such a manner as to meet the criteria of a "good" questionnaire. These criteria are that (a) the questionnaire deals with a significant topic, and the significance is clearly stated either on the questionnaire or on the letter which accompanies it; (b) the questionnaire seeks only information which cannot be obtained from other sources; (c) the questionnaire is as short as possible; (d) the questionnaire is attractive in appearance and clearly printed or duplicated; (e) the directions are clear and complete, with important terms defined; (f)

each question deals with a single idea and is worded as simply as possible; (g) the questions are objective, with no leading questions designed to achieve desired responses; (h) the questions are presented in good psychological order, arranged from the general to the more specific; and (i) the questionnaire is structured in such a way that the responses are easy to tabulate and interpret. In following this model, it was the intent of the researcher to construct a valid questionnaire which had high coefficients of reliability.

**Changes**. The questionnaire was subjected to a thorough review and revision process. Four of the initial questions were removed; two were considered repetitive and two were considered to be not suitable for collecting the required data. The structure of the questionnaire was changed so that the possible responses to each question were organized in a vertical, rather than horizontal, format. The final draft of the questionnaire reflected these improvements.

## Response Rates

Galfo (1975) noted that "the questionnaire is probably the method most frequently used for collecting data. Its principle advantage is economy because many subjects can be surveyed for the cost of postage" (p. 35). In addition to the issue of cost, the survey approach was considered to be the most efficient method for collecting data from an overall population too large to observe directly. One concern with this approach, however, is the possibility of low response rates, a problem discussed by many writers (e.g., Gay, 1976; Galfo, 1975; Kerlinger, 1973, Palys, 1992). Palys (1992) commented that "impersonal mail-out questionnaires more commonly result in response rates in the 10 to 40 percent range" (p. 163). As Kerlinger (1973) observed, "high response rates to mail questionnaires, although very important, are rare. The researcher may have to be satisfied with return rates of 50% or 60%" (p. 14). In order to have a usable number of responses, therefore, one must judge the appropriate number of persons to sample.

### Predicted Response Rates

A review of recent studies conducted by graduate students in the Department of Educational Administration at the University of Alberta located eight studies which used a mailed questionnaire. Although Elfu (1991) and Jones (1993) averaged a response of 58.9%, this was with a sample of university faculty members. In contrast the studies of Johnson (1988), Sanders (1980), and Smith (1993) averaged a response of 90.2%

with a sample group consisting of school administrators. The average response rates of teachers appeared to be somewhere between these two extremes.

Sanders (1980) obtained a 60% response rate from the teachers in his study of the inservice training needs of principals in one Alberta school jurisdiction. Johnson (1988), in a major study of effectiveness and job satisfaction among elementary principals in Alberta, obtained a 67% response rate from the teachers who were surveyed. Clarke (1991) surveyed teachers' perceptions of school discipline and received a 63% response while Rymhs (1990), who explored job satisfaction levels among teachers in a small rural Alberta school jurisdiction, obtained a response rate of 77.6%. It appeared, therefore, that recent surveys involving teachers had achieved an average response rate of almost 67%.

Two studies had achieved higher than average response rates from teachers. One of these was conducted at the University of Alberta (Carruthers, 1986) and the other at the University of Saskatchewan (Goddard, 1990b). Carruthers (1986) obtained an 80.3% response to his questionnaire concerning the role of mentors with beginning teachers. A response rate of 86.2% was obtained by Goddard (1990b) in his study of situational factors which affect the preferred leadership behaviours of principals in effective schools. In both studies, however, the researchers delivered the questionnaires to the teachers by hand and provided explanations and clarifications where requested. As hand delivery of the questionnaires in this study was difficult due to the geographical dispersement of the participants, an average response rate of about two thirds was anticipated when planning the size of the sample. Surveys were mailed to approximately 150 teachers in each setting. The predicted overall response rate of about 67% was expected to result in 100 returned surveys from each setting, a number considered sufficient for confident analysis. The prediction was tested in the pilot study.

**Pilot Study Response Rates**

In the pilot study, surveys were mailed to 18 teachers, with the prediction that 12 surveys would be returned. This prediction was achieved, for an overall response rate of 67%. The teachers were not selected in equal numbers from schools representative of the three regions. This was a deliberate decision by the researcher. As the pilot study was conducted towards the end of the school year, it was feared that some teachers in the more isolated schools might not receive the questionnaire before the close of school. As these tended to be located in First Nations communities, more of

the questionnaires were therefore distributed to band operated schools. The response rates were not equal from each setting but there were an equal number of responses from each setting, as determined by the respondents' self-identification of the setting in which their school was located (see Table 3.1).

In achieving an overall response rate of two thirds, which was at the level anticipated, the researcher felt justified in targeting 450 teachers for the major study. This was predicted to yield an appropriate number of responses for robust statistical analyses to be performed.

Table 3.1
Distribution of Response Rates for the Pilot Study Questionnaire

| Milieu | # distributed | # respondents | % response |
|---|---|---|---|
| Urban | 5 | 4 | 80 |
| Rural | 6 | 4 | 67 |
| Band operated | 7 | 4 | 57 |
| Overall | 18 | 12 | 67 |

**Main Study Response Rates**

As shown in Table 3.2, the response rates to the questionnaire in the main study did not meet expectations. Although the response from urban teachers was quite high at 75%, the response rates from the other two regions were not as high. Indeed, responses were received from less than 40 per cent of the teachers at both the rural (37%) and band operated (39%) schools. This level of response, while higher than that estimated by Palys (1992), is within the range suggested by Kerlinger (1973). The overall response rate of 51% nonetheless poses a significant limitation on the study.

Table 3.2
Distribution of Response Rates for the Main Study Questionnaire

| Milieu | # distributed | # respondents | % response |
|---|---|---|---|
| Urban | 150 | 113 | 75 |
| Rural | 150 | 56 | 37 |
| Band operated | 150 | 58 | 39 |
| Overall | 450 | 228 | 51 |

## The Interviews

There exists no extant guide to determine how many interviews are appropriate when conducting follow-up interviews to supplement and enhance a survey questionnaire. A review of recent University of Alberta doctoral studies which used a similar two-stage model found that the interviewees were usually selected from those who were geographically located close to the researcher. For example, Johnson (1988) conducted follow-up interviews with 14 of the 131 teacher respondents to his survey whereas Smith (1993) interviewed 10 of the 108 respondents to her survey of junior high school principals. In the present study the number of interviews conducted was to an extent dependent both on the response rates and on financial considerations.

As Lincoln and Guba (1985) observed, an interview "is a conversation with a purpose" (p. 268). The purpose in this instance was to delve more deeply into the information collected through the questionnaire. This process allowed the researcher to focus special attention on selected findings and to develop a deeper understanding of the issues facing teachers in ethnoculturally diverse, and ethnoculturally different, classrooms. The interviews also provided the researcher with anecdotal data to supplement the quantitative analysis of the responses to the questionnaire. The interviews were semi-structured and sought to confirm trends identified by the researcher from the analyses of responses to the questionnaire. The purpose of these interviews was, as Guba and Lincoln (1981) have suggested, to provide "structural corroboration" to the questionnaire responses. The use of semi-structured interviews helped facilitate, as Gay (1976) and others have noted, the collection of comparable

data across different subject groups. The data from the interviews are incorporated into the findings of the study.

**The Interviewees**

Eight educators were interviewed during stage 2 of this study. A purposive sampling method was used to determine interviewees. On completing their survey, respondents had been asked to also complete and mail a separate postcard. Those who were willing to be considered as participants in stage 2 of the study were requested to identify this fact on their postcard. From the returned postcards, eight respondents were selected to be interviewed.

The eight interviewees were selected based on geographical location. It had been determined that, due to lower response rates, the "voices" of teachers from rural and isolated schools had been under-represented in the survey analyses. Accordingly, four of the interviewees were selected from rural school districts and four from isolated school districts. All of the interviewees were employed in different schools.

Four of the interviews were conducted over the telephone and four were face-to-face meetings. Of the latter, three took place in the field and one occurred in Edmonton, where the respondent happened to be visiting for a conference. The interviews varied in length from 30 minutes to 75 minutes. The average interview was 44 minutes in length. All interviews were audio tape recorded and transcribed by the researcher.

**Telephone interviews**. The four telephone interviews followed the prescribed interview schedule (see Appendix 2). The telephone conversations were tape recorded and subsequently transcribed by the researcher.

Interviewee #1 was Jenny, a teacher from a rural school division. She taught in a junior and senior high school which catered to approximately 300 students from grades 8 to 11. The school was in a period of change and was about to move to a grades 9 to 12 format.

Interviewee #2 was Hilary. She taught in an isolated First Nations school which offered a Kindergarten to grade 10 program to a reported enrolment of 485 students.

Interviewee #3 was Sue. She taught in a rural school within a county district. Her school offered a Kindergarten to grade 8 program to about 150 students.

Interviewee #4 was Steve. He taught in a rural school division. His school offered a Kindergarten to grade 6 program and enrolled about 250 students.

**Face-to-face interviews**. The four face-to-face interviews were scheduled when the researcher was travelling in northern Saskatchewan. On making initial contact with

the interviewees, it was determined that two of the four were also administrators within their respective schools. The researcher decided to continue with the interviews as it was believed that the perception of teaching administrators would be as useful to the study as the perceptions of teachers without administrative responsibilities. Respondents were contacted by telephone and asked if it was convenient for the researcher to meet with them during his visit to the area. Three agreed, and the fourth indicated that he would be in the Edmonton region for a conference and would prefer that the interview occur there. This was arranged.

The face-to-face interviews followed the prescribed interview schedule less closely than had the telephone interviews. Although the same questions were asked as had been asked during the telephone interviews, the time constraints that were psychologically imposed by long distance telephone charges were not present. The conversations were less structured and became much more wide ranging in their scope. The conversations were tape recorded and subsequently transcribed by the researcher.

Interviewee #5 was John. He was principal of an elementary school in a rural school division. His school was located in a small town and offered a Kindergarten to grade 6 program to approximately 500 students.

Interviewee #6 was Tracy. She taught in an isolated First Nations school which offered a Kindergarten to grade 8 program to about 50 students.

Interviewee #7 was Petra. She taught in an isolated First Nations school which offered a Kindergarten to Grade 12 program to over 550 students.

Interviewee #8 was Brian. He was the principal of an isolated First Nations school which offered a Kindergarten to grade 12 program to an estimated 350 students.

## Analyses of Data

The data were subjected to two different types of analysis. As Best (1981) notes,

> the ultimate purpose [of research] is to develop generalizations that may be used to explain phenomena and to predict future occurrences. . . . Measurement is the most precise and universally accepted process of description, assigning quantitative values to the properties of objects and events. (p. 220)

To this end the survey data collected from the questionnaires were subjected to statistical analyses. In recognition of the fact that the quantitative approach has been criticized in recent years because of its failure to recognize the human foibles inherent in

social research, a qualitative component was built into the study. As Rudestam and Newton (1992) have observed, it is important that the researcher does not "overemphasize the importance of 'statistically significant' findings and [thus] underemphasize the importance of clinically or socially significant findings" (p. 28). A qualitative analysis of the interview responses and the written answers to open-ended questions on the survey instrument served to enhance the study and provided balance to the quantitative analyses.

## Statistical Analyses

The responses to the questionnaire were collated and subjected to statistical analysis. Means and percentage frequency distributions were determined for each item. A correlation matrix of the responses to the items on the questionnaire was computed. In order to explore underlying patterns of relationships and permit the data to be described in sets of items, or scales, factor analysis techniques were then employed.

### Factor Analyses

Following Spearritt (1988), factor analysis was used "in an exploratory manner, to explore the underlying dimensions" (p. 647) of the data. First, the principal factors were determined by finding the eigenvalues of the correlation matrix described above. Spearritt notes that there are a number of acceptable ways of determining the number of principal factors to be retained for further analysis. These methods include selecting an eigenvalue of 1 as the criterion for selection, using the Scree test to graph the factors and determine where the eigenvalues level off, or developing other subjective criteria (pp. 648-649). Following discussion with the data analyst employed by the department, it was determined that the criterion used to determine the principal factors would be that point where a distinct break in the rank of the eigenvalues was apparent.

Using the SPSS-X computer program, two varimax rotations of the axes were performed. This type of analytic rotation "was designed to generate factors on which some variables have high loadings and others have low loadings . . . and is very widely used" (Spearritt, 1988, p. 651). The responses to 62 items related to the actual experiences of respondents in their preservice and inservice teacher education programs were subjected to further processing. Using the distinct break method described above, six principal factors were identified with an eigenvalue greater than 2. These factors, which had eigenvalues of 8.20, 5.55, 3.72, 2.81, 2.33, and 2.04 respectively, accounted for 39.8 percent of the variance. Factors 1 through 6 accounted for 13.2

percent, 9.0 percent, 6.0 percent, 4.5 percent, 3.8 percent, and 3.3 percent respectively of the variance.

The responses to 21 items related to the preferred experiences of respondents, those items which they believed should have been a significant part of their preservice and inservice teacher education programs, were processed in the second rotation. Using the distinct break method previously described, six principal factors were identified with an eigenvalue higher than 1. The factors had eigenvalues of 5.14, 2.90, 1.93, 1.40, 1.26, and 1.01 respectively, which accounted for 65.2 percent of the variance. Factors 1 through 6 accounted for 24.5 percent, 13.8 percent, 9.2 percent, 6.7 percent, 6.0 percent, and 5.1 percent respectively of the variance.

## Development of Scales

The two data sets were then further analyzed. The items which clustered to each of the principal factors were identified, a process which enabled the researcher to properly label the cluster, or scale, in a suitably accurate and descriptive manner. There were 12 scales in all, six in each set.

### Underlying Dimensions in Actual Experiences

The researcher identified 62 items which related to the actual experiences of respondents in their preservice and inservice teacher education programs. Items were considered to contribute to the meaning of one of the six scales in this set if they loaded at or greater than 0.40 to that scale and if they contributed, in a logical and conceptually coherent manner, to the meaning of that scale. Where an item loaded on more than one scale at 0.40 or above then the highest loading was selected, subject to the item also meeting the coherency criterion.

Of the 62 items under consideration, five did not load at 0.40 or greater to any of the six scales. These items were discarded. The essential characteristics of the six scales identified are as described below.

**Scale A1: Problems faced by beginning teachers**. The eleven items in this scale describe the problems perceived to be faced by respondents in their first year of teaching. These problems are reminiscent of those reported elsewhere in the literature (e.g., Avery & Walker, 1993; Cooke & Pang, 1991).

The respondents were asked to describe the degree of difficulty they had experienced in dealing with individual student differences in learning ability, in identifying levels of individual student knowledge, and in adapting curricula to reflect local culture and meet local needs. They were also asked to relate their experiences in

dealing with slow learners and in overcoming the low motivation of some students to learn.

**Scale A2: Items associated with school effectiveness**. Although educators argue passionately as to what constitutes an effective school, there is a certain consensus as to how a less effective school might be identified and defined. The sixteen items on this scale represent issues commonly discussed in the effective schools literature (e.g., Edmonds, 1979; Manasse, 1985; Wimpleberg, Teddlie, & Stringfield, 1989) as being indicative of a less effective school. Respondents were asked to indicate whether they had experienced major problems with truancy and high levels of unacceptable student behaviour, for example, and whether there tended not to be good classroom management shown by teachers nor strong leadership provided by the principal. For purposes of analysis and simplification of interpretation the scores were reflected so that high scores would represent effectiveness rather than ineffectiveness.

**Scale A3: Actual preservice ethnocultural preparation of teachers**. The thirteen items on this scale reflect the experiences of respondents with respect to the actual inclusion of ethnocultural knowledge in their preservice programs. Items associated with this factor included whether respondents received any special preparation which focused on the ethnocultural diversity of contemporary classrooms, whether they were provided with knowledge of a variety of ethnoculturally appropriate teaching and learning styles, and whether their courses included attempts to explain different theories of ethnocultural minority student learning and achievement.

**Scale A4: Addressing ethnocultural diversity at the school level**. The seven items on this scale present the steps which respondents had observed being taken, at the school level, to address ethnocultural diversity. Items included the extent to which specific ethnocultural information was provided in the job advertisement and the existence of distinct policies which addressed the needs of ESL learners.

**Scale A5: Special provisions for new teachers**. The six items on this scale describe the opportunities and supplies provided to, and experienced by, respondents when they were beginning teachers. Items associated with this scale required the respondent to report the degree to which they experienced what they considered to be appropriate library resources, time for lesson planning, and so forth. Together with these items, respondents were asked to indicate the opportunities for collaboration with other teachers which they experienced, whether they were given the opportunity to choose a "buddy" who would act as a mentor during the first year, and

the provision of additional classroom resources and special workshops or inservice sessions which specifically addressed the needs of beginning teachers.

**Scale A6: Addressing ethnocultural diversity at the classroom level.** The four items on this scale recount the respondents' practices in their interactions with ethnoculturally diverse students, particularly those for whom English was a second language or dialect (ESL/ESD). Respondents were asked to indicate whether they adjusted their marking strategies for students who spoke non-standard English and, also, whether they took the non-standard spoken English of students into account when assessing reading and writing skills.

**Underlying Dimensions in Preferred Experiences**

The researcher identified 21 items which related to the preferred experiences of respondents in their preservice and inservice teacher education programs. As in the analysis for the actual experiences items, items were considered to contribute to the meaning of one of the six scales in this set if they loaded at or greater than 0.40 to that scale and if they contributed, in a logical and conceptually coherent manner, to the meaning of that scale. Also, where an item loaded on more than one scale at 0.40 or above the the highest loading was selected, subject to the item also meeting the coherency criterion.

Of the 21 items under consideration, one did not load at 0.40 or greater to any of the six scales. This item was discarded. The essential characteristics of the six scales identified are as described below.

**Scale P1: Preferred preservice ethnocultural preparation of teachers.** The six items on this scale describe beliefs held by respondents with respect to what ethnocultural knowledge should be included in the preservice preparation of teachers. For example, respondents were asked to state whether this knowledge should include the skills to analyze and adapt curricula so that the material which is taught has ethnocultural relevance and applicability. They were also asked to discuss the extent to which preservice teachers should be made cognizant of theories which explain the differences in student learning and achievement that appear to exist between majority and minority ethnocultural groups.

**Scale P2: Preferred opportunities for new teachers.** The four items on this scale present the beliefs held by respondents with respect to what supportive opportunities should be provided to new teachers. Items associated with this scale asked respondents to suggest the degree to which they were provided opportunities for

collegial collaboration and the chance to observe more experienced teachers as part of their regular employment.

**Scale P3: Preferred orientation practices**. The three items on this scale describe beliefs held by respondents with respect to what practices ought to be included in the orientation period for new teachers. Teachers were asked to indicate whether they perceived a need to provide an opportunity to review standard school operating procedures, for example through an examination of the policy and procedures manual where that exists, to discuss school discipline practices, and so forth, as part of a planned orientation.

**Scale P4: Preferred special provisions for new teachers**. The fourth scale related to the preferred inservice experiences of respondents and consisted of two items. These addressed whether there was a perceived need to provide new teachers with specific supplies reserved for their use, including both actual physical resources and extra planning time, as a means to offset some of the unique difficulties experienced by new teachers.

**Scale P5: Community issues**. The three items on this scale describe beliefs held by respondents with respect to their acquiring ethnocultural knowledge about the community and the school. Respondents were asked to indicate whether they believed that specific ethnocultural information about the school and the community should be included in the original job advertisement and whether they perceived the interview process as an effective way of determining linguistic and ethnocultural compatibility with the community.

**Scale P6: Student failure**. The two items on this scale describe beliefs held by the respondents with respect to possible reasons for student failure.

**Commentary**

The factor analysis allowed for the identification of scales consisting of related clusters of items. In permitting the reduction of the data to manageable proportions, the factor analysis facilitated a more efficient statistical analysis of the findings. In addition to means and percentage frequency distributions, the data were examined through the use of one-way analyses of variance and two-tailed *t* -tests. In view of the multiple constituencies involved in the study, the data were analyzed for each separate constituency and were then compared for similarities and differences between constituency groups. Following the calculation of percentage frequency distributions, Pearson product moment correlations were computed to determine relationships

between different pairs of variables. A critical value of $p<0.05$ was set to determine statistical significance, and all statistics except p values were rounded to two decimal places. Where necessary, statistical p values were truncated to three decimal places.

## Qualitative Analysis

There were three open-ended questions on the survey instrument. The responses to these questions were transcribed by the researcher. Further, the responses were content analyzed to determine categories for further investigation. Issues raised in the responses were categorized and these categories formed the basis of the questions included in the semi-structured interviews. The interviews served to confirm these categories as appropriate issues for discussion insofar as the preparation of teachers for ethnocultural diversity was concerned.

## Reliability and Validity

As the researcher developed the questionnaire used in the study, the issues of the reliability and validity of the questionnaire were as important as the issue of the reliability of the data. Thorndike (1988) has commented that

> in evaluating a test two broad questions are encountered that are different but overlapping. A first question is how accurately the test sample represents the broader universe of responses from which it is drawn; a second is how faithfully that universe corresponds to the latent attribute in which one is interested. The first relates to what is commonly called the 'reliability' of the test, the second to its 'validity.' (p. 330)

In this part of the chapter the issues of reliability and validity are addressed.

### Reliability

The reliability of the questionnaire was strengthened by measures taken to carefully design the questions and to provide the same questions, with no variations, to all respondents. Data reliability was further established through the use of multiple data collection methods. In the initial review of the literature issues relevant to the ethnocultural preparation of teachers were identified. The questionnaire reflected those issues and the respondents to the pilot study confirmed the accuracy of those issues, from their own experience. Following the administration of the questionnaire to a stratified sample of teachers working in three distinct sociocultural and geographical

environments, statistical analyses of the responses provided further data for verification through the second stage of the data collection.

These data were then checked through a series of semi-structured interviews with selected respondents, the purposes of which were to "thicken" the data, establish the reliability of the data, and confirm the conclusions made subsequent to the data analysis. This allowed the reliability of the questionnaire to be inferred by comparing the responses from the different constituent samples within the main study.

The reliability of the questionnaire was also checked through tests of internal consistency. According to Best (1981) the reliability of an instrument means that "whatever it determines it does so consistently" (p. 154). There are different ways of determining the reliability of a test or survey instrument. Livingston (1988) describes three types of potential measurement error, discusses five such types of reliability which can be used to address those errors, and notes that "it is meaningless to talk about the reliability of a test without specifying the sources of measurement error that are being considered" (p. 386). The research being reported here was not concerned with two of the sources of measurement error reported by Livingston, those being the time of testing and the person who scores the tests (p. 387). In the first instance, the instrument was only administered once and so issues of short-term changes in the respondent's memory, and thus the stability of the test, were not applicable. Second, the issue of scorer consistency was not present as the instrument involved multiple choice questions which did not require subjective scoring. As a result, the issue of inter-rater reliability did not arise.

In a study of this nature, Thorndike (1988) notes that a third type of measurement error which might arise is concerned with issues related to the fact that the "data-collecting strategy relies on the internal analysis of a single test administration" (p. 341). Livingston (1988) discusses three types of reliability which can be considered when determining the source of measurement error related to the "selection of specific questions to test a more general ability" (p. 386). These are alternate forms reliability, split-halves reliability, and internal consistency (p. 387).

The questionnaire had sought to test two distinct fields of inquiry, those being the actual and preferred experiences of teachers in their preservice and initial inservice programs. A set of six scales was developed for each field. Item analyses were conducted for each of these two sets of scales. There were 62 items in the actual experiences scales and 21 items in the preferred experiences scales. The items

included in these scales had been scored both dichotomously and continuously. Therefore, following Youngman (1979), Thorndike (1988), and others, Cronbach's coefficient alpha was used to determine the degree of consistency within the test. Allal (1988) notes that "the interpretation [of Cronbach's coefficient alpha] is analogous to that of classical reliability coefficients. Values approaching 1.0 indicate that the scores . . . can be differentiated with a high degree of accuracy while generalizing over random variations in the sampling of items" (p. 273). The reliability coefficient for the actual experiences set of scales was alpha = 0.69 and for the preferred experiences set of scales was alpha = 0.81. Following Allal (1988), Fisher, Grady, and Fraser (1995), Thorndike (1988), and others, these values suggest that there is a satisfactory internal consistency displayed in each scale set and that the reliability of the questionnaire was acceptable.

The internal consistency of the questionnaire was also determined using both the Spearman-Brown prophesy formula and the Guttman split-half scale (Kerlinger, 1973; Best, 1981). The Spearman-Brown formula was utilized because the scales were of unequal length and the formula corrects for this when it correlates "the scores on the odd items [of the survey questionnaire] against the even items" (Best, 1981, p. 254). For items pertaining to the actual experiences of teachers, a Spearman-Brown coefficient of r = 0.79 was obtained. For items pertaining to the preferred experiences of teachers, a Spearman-Brown coefficient of r = 0.89 was obtained. These values indicate that the internal consistency of the two scales, when adjusted for their unequal length, was relatively high.

Following Kerlinger (1973), the fact that the questionnaire consisted "of a relatively small set of homogeneous items that [were] unidimensional" (p. 497) suggested that the Guttman split-half scale would also provide a useful gauge of the internal reliability of the questionnaire. Therefore, two split-half analyses were conducted, one for each of the scales. This use of two split-half methods allowed the coefficient of reliability for each part of the instrument to be determined. For questions pertaining to the actual experiences of teachers, the split-half method resulted in a Guttman split-half coefficient of r = 0.79. The coefficient for the 31 items in the first half was alpha = 0.56. The coefficient for the 31 items in the second half was alpha = 0.40. For questions pertaining to the preferred experiences of teachers, the split-half method resulted in a Guttman split-half coefficient of r = 0.88. The coefficient for the 11 items in the first half was alpha = 0.70. The coefficient for the 10 items in the second half was alpha =

0.60. These values indicate that the reliability of the scale measuring the preferred experiences of teachers was higher than that of the scale measuring the actual experiences of teachers.

Taken together, the use of multiple data collection strategies and the reliability coefficients obtained from the tests suggested a certain reliability to the questionnaire in that there were strong indications of internal consistency within the items. However, as Youngman (1979) has noted,

> reliability alone is not sufficient. . . . It is possible to construct a perfectly reliable test which has no validity and therefore no research value. The argument returns to the need for all research analysis to maintain a sound theoretical link with the research objective. (p. 180).

Such a caution requires the researcher to also determine the validity of the instrument.

**Validity**

In the same way that all cognacs are brandies but being offered a brandy does not guarantee that one will receive a cognac, so any instrument must be reliable to be valid but being reliable does not in itself guarantee validity (Palys, 1992). There are three types of validity which must be considered, those of internal (Tate, 1988) or content (Zeller, 1988) validity, external (Tate, 1988) or criterion (Zeller, 1988) validity, and construct validity (Tate, 1988; Zeller, 1988).

According to Best and Kahn (1989), Palys (1992), and others, an instrument is valid if it measures what it claims to measure. In the present study, as the items included on the questionnaire were drawn from the related literature and were subjected to review prior to being finalized, it appears that the instrument has face validity (Palys, 1992, p. 195). Further, as the indicators which were included on the questionnaire were representative of the constructs being assessed, the content or internal validity of the instrument was established (Tate, 1988; Zeller, 1988).

Johnson (1988) recognized that content validation is a subjective process. In a province-wide study of principal effectiveness and job satisfaction, he ensured that

> the process of questionnaire construction was informed by an expansive theoretical and research literature, a variety of prior research instruments and preliminary interviews and pilot tests with practitioners in the field. The

> instruments were also reviewed by the researcher's supervisory committee and by school district administrators. (p. 114)

Similar processes were followed in the present study. Best (1981) stated that "basic to the validity of a questionnaire are the right questions phrased in the least ambiguous way" (p. 179). The questionnaire was developed from the literature and was therefore considered to contain the right questions for a study in this area. The amount of ambiguity existing within those questions was minimized by a comprehensive process which involved peer review, a review by the members of the researcher's supervisory committee, and an analysis of the perceptions of practitioners in the field through the pilot study. I believe that these steps strengthened the construct and content validity of the instrument and of the findings which arose from the analyses of the responses.

External validity, as Tate (1988) noted, refers to the "validity of the generalizability of study results to explicit or implicit target populations" (p. 96). This is achieved when the constructs generated by the study are applicable across groups. Tate cautions that "external validity is threatened when there is a combination of two factors: (a) a question about representativeness of the sample, and (b) a possibility of interaction between treatment and subjects, settings, or times" (p. 96). Although the latter is not of concern, the unequal distribution of responses does threaten the external validity of the study. Caution must be exercised when generalizing the findings of the study to those populations outside the urban milieu.

### Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations

One purpose of the study was to explore the extent to which teachers are being prepared to be effective educators in the ethnoculturally diverse classrooms of contemporary Canadian schools. As for all such studies, there were certain assumptions, limitations, and delimitations which must be recognized. Following Best (1981):

> Limitations are those conditions beyond the control of the researcher that may place restrictions on the conclusions of the study and their application to other situations, . . . assumptions are statements of what the researcher believes to be facts, but cannot verify, and . . . delimitations are the boundaries beyond which the study is not concerned. (p. 40)

The assumptions, limitations, and delimitations of the study are described below.

**Assumptions**

The study was predicated on two major assumptions: first, that the classrooms of contemporary Western Canadian schools are indeed ethnoculturally diverse and, second, that there is some means by which the effectiveness of the teachers in those classrooms can be measured.

The design of the study was premised upon the assumption that there are certain attitudes, skills, and knowledge which (a) teachers can be presumed to have, (b) are identifiable in the effective teaching of ethnoculturally diverse students, and (c) teachers are able to assess, reflect upon, and report through the data collection stages of the study. It was further assumed that the collected data would be accurate and truthful reflections of what the respondents believed.

**Limitations**

The major limitation of the study was the low overall response rate. A total of 228 questionnaires, or 50.6% of the total distributed, were returned. The relatively high return rate of 75.3% of the surveys from urban schools allows for some optimism in the interpretation of data for that region. The lower rates of return of surveys from rural (37.3%) and Band-operated (38.6%) schools require that the interpretation of data for those two areas be much more tentative. The low response rates from these two areas require any interpretation of data to be tempered by the possibility that response and non-response bias might exist in the findings.

The validity of the collected data from the initial questionnaire was limited by the extent to which the questionnaire accurately represented the salient variables from the literature. During the second stage, the data available were limited to those variables emanating from the first stage and identified by the researcher as being important and appropriate for further exploration. The researcher conducted a validity check to ensure the accuracy of the interpretation of data collected through the interview process. Nonetheless, the validity of the collected data from the interviews was further limited by the extent to which the interview questions accurately reflected those variables identified in the responses to the questionnaire as being highly relevant to the ethnocultural preparation of teachers.

The survey method used to collect data for the study provided no opportunity for the researcher to probe further into the attitudes, reasons, feelings, and general

understandings of the respondents, nor did it provide an opportunity to check or correct any possible misinterpretation of the questions. Neither did the second stage interviews provide this opportunity as there was no way of correlating the verbal responses of an interviewee with the written responses on the questionnaire of any specific respondent.

The data obtained from the questionnaires and the interviews were limited by the information which was provided by the respondents. The usefulness of this information was limited, in turn, by the truthfulness and accuracy of the comments made by respondents with respect to their perceptions of their effectiveness as teachers.

The study was also limited in that respondents were asked to report what they perceived to be ethnocultural heterogeneity and homogeneity. Such responses were therefore subject to variances in perception and definition, as there were no means by which the perception of a respondent that she or he worked with an ethnoculturally homogeneous group of students could be validated. Similarly, the degree to which these variances existed in individual perceptions of identical classrooms was not tested.

Although socioeconomic class is an important factor which effects student learning, this issue was not specifically addressed in the study. Further, the study was limited to schools which are commonly described as being 'public schools.' As such, no attempt was made to explore the effects, if any, of religious or denominational factors.

**Delimitations**

The study was delimited to an exploration of the role played by preservice teacher education and inservice teacher experience in the preparation of teachers to be effective educators in ethnoculturally diverse classrooms. While recognizing the importance of the personal qualities of teachers to their future professional success, the study did not address this aspect of teacher effectiveness.

The study was delimited to a finite number of teachers as determined, by the supervisory committee of the study and me, to be sufficient for the purposes of the study to be achieved. The first stage data collection, which involved a mailed questionnaire, was delimited to a sample of teachers drawn from three specific sociogeographical milieux.

The first stage data collection was delimited to those variables identified in the literature related to the ethnocultural preparation of teachers and considered to be salient to the study. During the first stage, the data collected were limited to those emanating from the questions asked and the variety and number of concepts presented on the survey instrument.

The second stage data collection, which involved a series of semi-structured interviews entailing open-ended responses to general statements, was delimited to a purposive and opportunistic cross-section of teachers drawn from those who responded to the questionnaire.

The second stage data collection was delimited to those variables which the researcher identified from the responses to the questionnaire as being of highest relevance to the ethnocultural preparation of teachers.

The selection of interviewees for the second stage of the research process was delimited to those who responded to the questionnaire, to those who were invited and subsequently consented to be interviewed and, further, to those respondents to whom the researcher had either telephone or personal access.

## Ethical Considerations

The study was conducted according to the procedures established by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada for conducting research which involves human subjects. In accordance with the requirements of the University of Alberta, a statement outlining compliance with the guidelines was submitted to, and approved by, the Ethics Review Committee of the Department of Educational Policy Studies prior to the study being undertaken.

Permission to conduct the study was received from the senior administrator of each jurisdiction involved in the study and, in cases where this was a First Nations jurisdiction, from the Chief and Band Council of that particular First Nation. Participants in the first stage of the study were not required to provide written consent of their willingness to participate. However, they were given sufficient information about the study, through the provision of a research statement, that their return of a completed questionnaire could be properly assumed to indicate consent to participate in the study.

Participants in the second stage of the data collection were asked to provide written consent of their willingness to participate. All responses were coded but otherwise remain anonymous to all but the researcher. Upon completion of the study the accumulated data were maintained for possible future secondary analysis by the researcher but will not be made available to others except in aggregated form. All participants were made aware of the voluntary nature of their participation and of their right to withdraw from the study at any time. Further, all participants were advised of

their right to contact the research supervisor should they have any concerns or complaints. None did.

## Summary

In this chapter the methods by which this study was conducted are presented. The research paradigm is explained and the research design described. A description of how the pilot study was conducted is followed by a discussion of the data collection instruments utilized in the study. The methods by which the collected data were analyzed are described. Issues of reliability and validity are discussed, and the results of tests of reliability presented. The assumptions, limitations, and delimitations inherent in the study are explained and a statement provided detailing how the ethical guidelines of the University of Alberta were met.

The chapter has described the methods by which study explored the extent to which teachers are being prepared to be effective educators in the ethnoculturally diverse classrooms of contemporary Western Canadian schools. The collected data provided a source of factual information regarding the sociocultural contextualization of teacher education and allowed the researcher to address the general research problem through a series of specific research questions. The findings are presented and discussed in chapters IV through VII. In chapter VIII are presented an overview of the study, a summary of the findings, and the theoretical, practical, and research implications of the study

# CHAPTER IV

## ETHNOCULTURAL DIVERSITY

In this chapter, the first specific research question of the study is addressed. This sought to determine the following:

> **To what extent does ethnocultural diversity exist in those schools which are included in the study?**

As previously discussed, ethnocultural is an inclusive term which refers to issues of language, ethnicity, race, gender, culture, geographical location, socio-economic class, age, and heritage. The ethnocultural diversity of a school is not limited to the existence of such issues within the student body alone. It is also determined by the presence of such issues with respect to the teaching staff of the school and with respect to the school itself.

### Findings

In addressing the research question, the demographic data collected from responses to 12 items in Part A and one item in Part D of the questionnaire are presented and discussed. Eight of these items were concerned with the ethnocultural diversity of the teaching force, two with the ethnocultural diversity of the student body, and the remaining two with issues related to the school itself.

#### Teachers

The ethnocultural diversity of the teachers responding to the questionnaire was explored. The eight items in this category which concerned the teaching force were related to the age of the teacher; the gender of the teacher; the number of languages spoken by the teacher; whether the teacher considered himself or herself to be a member of an ethnocultural group similar to the majority of the students; the number of years the teacher had taught; the number of years the teacher had been teaching in their present school; the location of the respondents' initial preservice teacher education program; and, whether the respondent lived in the same community as the majority of the students he or she taught. This information was sought in an attempt to provide one part of the answer to the first research question.

**Age of teachers.** Of the teachers who responded to the questionnaire, over 70% were 30 years of age or older. The data show that respondents were most often in the 30 to 39 years age range (37.5%, n = 84), although over one quarter were also in each of the under 30 years (29.5%, n = 66) and 40 to 49 years (26.3%, n = 59) age groups. There were 13 teachers (5.8%) in the 50 to 59 years and two teachers (0.9%) in the over 59 years groups.

**Gender of teachers.** In addressing the issue of gender, the study found that 69.6% (n = 158) of the respondents were female and 30.4% (n = 69) were male.

**Languages spoken by teachers.** In keeping with other Canadian data (e.g., Levin & Young, 1994; Lockhart, 1991) that suggest a primarily monolingual teaching force, over half of the teachers responding to the questionnaire indicated that they were monolingual (n =134, 59.3%). A third (n =70, 31%) reported that they were bilingual. The remainder indicated that they were multilingual and spoke either three (n = 17, 7.5%) or four (n = 5, 2.2%) languages.

**Ethnocultural similarity of teachers to students.** Respondents were asked to indicate whether they considered themselves to be ethnoculturally similar to or ethnoculturally different from the majority of the students whom they taught. Approximately two thirds of the respondents (n = 142, 62.8%) considered themselves to be ethnoculturally similar to the majority of their students while the remainder (n = 84, 36.8%) considered themselves to be ethnoculturally different from their students.

**Overall teaching experience.** The data indicate that the respondents were divided almost equally into three groups. The first group of respondents (n = 81, 35.8%) consisted of teachers who were at the beginning of their career and who had between 1 and 4 years of teaching experience. The second group of respondents (n = 70, 31%) had between 5 and 10 years of teaching experience while the third group (n = 75, 33.2%) had more than 11 years of teaching experience.

**Teaching experience in present school.** Over three quarters of the respondents (n = 171, 75.3%) had been in their present school for four or less years. Only 43 respondents (18.9%) had been in the same school for between 5 and 10 years. Even fewer (n =13, 5.7%) had been in the same school for 11 or more years.

**Location of initial preservice teacher education program.** The majority of respondents had been trained at one of the two major research universities in Western Canada. There were 118 respondents (55.4%) who had completed their initial teacher education program at the University of Alberta and 45 respondents (21.1%)

who had done so at the University of Saskatchewan. Of the other 50 respondents who completed this item, 12 (5.6%) had completed their preparation at the University of Regina and the remaining 38 (17.9%) at one of 24 other institutions offering preservice teacher education programs. The institutions represented were from many different areas of North America.

**Residence of respondent.** A majority of the respondents to this item (n = 128, 56.9%) indicated that they did not live in the same community as the majority of students whom they taught. The remainder (n = 97, 43.1%) indicated that they lived in the same community as most of their students.

### Students

The ethnocultural diversity of the students taught by those teachers responding to the questionnaire was explored. The two items in this category were related to the number of home languages spoken by the students and the ethnocultural heterogeneity of the student body.

**Languages spoken by students.** One quarter (n=57, 25.2%) of the respondents indicated that the same home language was spoken by all the students in their classrooms. A further 85 respondents (37.6%) indicated that two home languages were spoken by the students whom they taught, while the remaining 84 (37.2%) reported that three or more home languages, up to 11 in one instance, were represented in their classroom.

**Student ethnocultural heterogeneity.** Respondents were asked to indicate whether they considered their classrooms to be ethnoculturally homogeneous or ethnoculturally heterogeneous in character. Slightly more than half (n = 128, 57.1%) considered that the students in their classrooms were ethnoculturally homogeneous while the remainder (n = 96, 42.9%) considered their classrooms to be ethnoculturally heterogeneous.

### Schools

The ethnocultural diversity of the schools in which these teachers were employed was explored. The items in this category were related to the type of system in which the school was found and the size of school in which respondents were employed.

**Type of school system.** As indicated earlier, the teachers in the study were drawn from schools which operated in three different milieux. Broadly defined these represented urban, rural, and First Nations communities within Alberta and

Saskatchewan. One third (n = 150) of the questionnaires were distributed to teachers within each of these areas.

Teachers at an urban school district in Alberta provided almost half of the responses (n = 113, 49.8%). The other half came almost equally from schools in the other milieux. A slightly larger response (n = 58, 25.6%) was obtained from teachers in the more isolated First Nations (Band operated) schools than from those employed in rural schools (n = 56, 24.7%). Within the latter group the responses from teachers at schools within an Alberta county were almost twice as high (n = 37) as those received from teachers in the Saskatchewan school division (n = 19), even though each had received an equal number (n = 75) of the questionnaires.

**Size of school.** The respondents indicated that they taught in schools of many different sizes. These ranged from 20 respondents (8.8%) who taught in small schools of fewer than 150 students to an identical number who taught in schools with an enrolment of over 750 students. Approximately one third of respondents (n = 70, 31%) taught in schools with between 151 and 300 students, and a similar number (n = 74, 32.7%) taught in slightly larger schools of from 301 to 450 students. The remainder of the respondents taught in larger schools, with 33 (14.6%) reporting that their schools enrolled from 451 to 600 students and 9 (4%) reporting an enrolment of between 601 and 750 students.

## Discussion

The analyses of North American census data conducted by Banks (1991), Grant and Secada (1990), and Lockhart (1991), among others, indicate that over 70% of current inservice and preservice teachers are white, middle class and female. In the present study, female respondents outnumbered male respondents in the ratio of over 2:1. Such a ratio is consistent with data collected at the national level and indicates that women continue to be dominant in the classrooms.

Problems in teacher-student communication often arise due to language incompatibility and might be exacerbated when the majority of teachers are monolingual, except in those instances where the students are of the same ethnocultural background as the teacher. The data collected in the study suggest that the issue of linguistic knowledge might be worthy of consideration in preservice teacher education programs. Moodley (1995) noted that, in 1992, English was a second language for almost half the students in Vancouver and Toronto (p. 802). He added that this situation was exacerbated in that, in addition "to the range of home languages other than

English [there] is the presence of dialects of English" (p. 802). Although the present study included one large urban centre, this did not compare, in size, with either Toronto or Vancouver. Nonetheless, it was anticipated that bilingual and multilingual students would also constitute a large proportion of those taught by respondents. This was indeed the case.

The findings of the study indicate that almost 43% of the respondents were teaching an ethnoculturally diverse student body. Such an ethnoculturally heterogeneous community consists of students who can be expected to display a variety of learning styles. It would therefore appear appropriate that neophyte teachers be informed about the different learning styles as part of their preservice teacher education program. The data also suggest that a knowledge of a variety of learning styles, and skills in a variety of ethnoculturally specific teaching styles, would be beneficial to many teachers.

It was expected, from this study which sought to focus on the experiences of beginning teachers, that the majority of respondents would be at the beginning of their careers. Such was not the case. The study findings seem to reflect the lack of vacant positions in the profession over the past few years, which has resulted in fewer new teachers being employed. Rather, teachers reported that they have tended to be redeployed to fill vacancies which do become available. This redeployment of experienced teachers is supported by data describing the number of years respondents had taught in their present schools. As teachers in all jurisdictions reported that colleagues were being redeployed to meet staffing needs, so it would appear that the skills needed to reestablish oneself in a variety of positions and communities should be included in preservice teacher education programs and refreshed during inservice experiences.

These findings suggest that schools should pay increased attention to the orientation and induction of teachers who are new to the school, irrespective of their length of service elsewhere. Further, it would appear that it can no longer be assumed that all new teachers will be employed in a school jurisdiction, or even a given province, with which they are familiar.

## Conclusions

In addressing the extent to which ethnocultural diversity exists in those schools which were included in the study, it was found that the majority of respondents were monolingual and taught in medium-sized urban schools. The data suggest that the predominantly female, monolingual teaching force described by Banks (1991), Grant

and Secada (1990), and others, is alive and well in Western Canada. Although 59% of respondents described themselves as monolingual, almost 75% taught in classrooms where the students represented two or more home or first languages. Approximately 39% of the respondents considered themselves to be ethnoculturally different from the majority of their students. That such a large percentage of teachers might experience linguistic and ethnocultural differences with at least some of their students is cause for concern.

It would appear that some of these data suggest the need for a greater ethnocultural focus in preservice teacher education programs and in the initial inservice experiences of teachers. This has raised issues of ethnocultural sensitivity and the ability of teachers to be effective with students who are ethnoculturally different from themselves. The data suggest that both preservice teacher education programs and the initial inservice experiences of teachers should be reviewed and revised so as to provide an increased ethnocultural focus.

As previously discussed, ethnocultural is an inclusive term which refers to issues of language, ethnicity, race, culture, geographical location, socio-economic class, and heritage. The ethnocultural diversity of a school is not limited to the existence of such issues within the student body alone but also their presence within the teaching staff of the school. In answering the first specific research question, an analysis of demographic data emanating from the study suggests that a wide range of ethnocultural diversity exists in those schools which were included in the study.

# CHAPTER V

## PROBLEMS EXPERIENCED BY BEGINNING TEACHERS

In this chapter, the second research question of the study is addressed. This sought to determine the following:

> **To what extent do the problems experienced by beginning teachers in ethnoculturally diverse classrooms differ from those experienced by beginning teachers generally?**

As mentioned in the methods chapter, a scale was developed of the questionnaire items identifying the problems experienced by the beginning teachers in the study. Through factor analysis eleven items describing the problems faced by respondents in their first year of teaching clustered together. These problems were reminiscent of those reported elsewhere in the literature (e.g., Avery & Walker, 1993; Cooke & Pang, 1991). In the first section of the chapter the results of a number of statistical analyses are reported. The second section consists of a discussion of the findings of this study within the context of other studies. The chapter ends with a number of conclusions drawn from the findings.

### Statistical Procedures

The results of a number of statistical analyses are reported here. These consisted of correlations, analyses of variance, and *t* -tests.

#### Correlations

Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients were computed to determine whether any relationships existed between the variety of problems faced by beginning teachers and items associated with school effectiveness (see Table 5.1). The data indicate that beginning teachers who were employed in schools they perceived to be more effective reported a greater variety of problems than did their colleagues in schools perceived to be less effective.

Table 5.1

Correlation between problems faced by beginning teachers and items associated with school effectiveness

| | Whole Group | Beginning Teachers 1-4 years | Urban | Rural | Band Operated |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Correlation | -.34 | -.50 | -.27 | -.07 | -.37 |
| N | 225 | 81 | 111 | 56 | 58 |
| Significance | <.001 | <.001 | .01 | ns | .01 |

A second set of Pearson product moment correlation coefficients were computed to determine whether a relationship existed between the problems faced by beginning teachers and items associated with the special provisions offered to beginning teachers (see Table 5.2). The data suggest that beginning teachers who received fewer special provisions, in the way of supportive opportunities, additional supplies, and so forth, were more likely to experience a greater variety of problems than their colleagues who

Table 5.2

Correlation between problems faced by beginning teachers and the special provisions made for them

| | Whole Group | Beginning Teachers 1-4 years | Urban | Rural | Band Operated |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Correlation | -.19 | -.34 | -.13 | -.23 | -.19 |
| N | 225 | 81 | 111 | 56 | 58 |
| Significance | .01 | .01 | ns | ns | .01 |

received more of such support. This support included opportunities for collegial collaboration, additional planning time, supplementary classroom resources, and inservice workshops specifically targeted at the needs of beginning teachers. New teachers who reported receiving more of this support tended to experience fewer problems during their first year in the profession than did those neophyte teachers who reported receiving less support.

**Analyses of Variance**

Statistical tests were conducted in order to determine the relationships between the problems experienced by respondents during their first year of teaching and the various ethnocultural variables previously discussed. The tests conducted included one-way analyses of variance (ANOVA) and *t* -tests. The results of these analyses are reported in relation to specific ethnocultural variables. The statistical tables are only presented where a statistically significant relationship was found to exist.

**Type of school system**. The results of the ANOVA of problems experienced by beginning teachers classified according to the type of school system are presented in Table 5.3. Three groups were formed: respondents employed in public schools; respondents employed in school division or county schools; and respondents employed in First Nations schools. The F ratio of 7.41 significant at the level $p<0.05$ indicated that at least one difference among the means was statistically significant. The Scheffé procedure revealed that the mean score for items associated with problems experienced by beginning teachers employed in First Nations schools was significantly higher than those associated with problems experienced by beginning teachers employed in either the public school district or in the school division and county schools.

**Size of school**. An ANOVA of problems experienced by beginning teachers classified according to the size of the school was performed. Four groups were formed: 20 respondents employed in schools with an enrolment of 150 or fewer students; 69 respondents employed in schools with an enrolment of between 151 and 300 students; 73 respondents employed in schools with an enrolment of between 301 and 450 students; and 62 respondents employed in a school which had an enrolment of 451 or more students. The analysis of variance revealed that no statistically significant differences existed between and among these groups with respect to the variety of problems they experienced.

Table 5.3

ANOVA of Problems Experienced by Beginning Teachers Classified According to the Type of School

| Type of School | N | Mean | Standard Deviation | F Ratio | Probability |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| a) Public | 111 | 2.86 | .78 | | |
| b) Division/County | 56 | 2.72 | .77 | 7.41 | 0.001 |
| c) First Nations | 58 | 3.23 | .64 | | |

Significantly different means : c>a; c>b.

**Student languages**. An ANOVA of problems experienced by beginning teachers classified according to the number of languages spoken by students in their classes was performed using three groups: 57 novice teachers whose students were monolingual; 84 whose students were bilingual; and 83 whose students were multilingual. The analysis revealed no statistically significant differences between and among these groups.

**Ethnocultural mix in classroom**. A two-tailed *t* -test was undertaken of problems experienced by beginning teachers classified into two groups according to the ethnocultural mix in the classroom: 128 respondents who perceived that the students they taught were ethnoculturally homogeneous and 94 respondents who perceived that the students they taught were ethnoculturally heterogeneous. The analysis revealed that no statistically significant differences existed between these two groups.

**Gender of teacher**. A two-tailed *t* -test was undertaken of problems experienced by beginning teachers classified according to gender: 157 of the respondents were female and 68 were male. The analysis revealed no statistically significant differences between groups based on the gender of the respondent.

**Location of preservice teacher education program**. The results of an ANOVA of the problems experienced by beginning teachers classified according to the location of the preservice teacher education program completed are presented in Table 5.4. Four groups were formed: respondents who had studied at the University of

Saskatchewan, respondents who had studied at the University of Alberta, respondents who had studied at the University of Regina, and respondents who had studied at one of 23 other institutions.

Table 5.4

ANOVA of Problems Experienced by Beginning Teachers Classified According to the Location of the Preservice Teacher Education Program

| Location of Preservice Teacher Education Program | N | Mean | Standard Deviation | F Ratio | Probability |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| a) U. Saskatchewan | 45 | 2.84 | .76 | | |
| b) U. Alberta | 118 | 2.94 | .77 | 2.96 | 0.03 |
| c) U. Regina | 12 | 3.51 | .60 | | |
| d) Other | 50 | 2.81 | .75 | | |

Significantly different means : c>a; c>d.

The F ratio of 2.96 significant at the level $p<0.05$ indicated that at least one difference among the means was statistically significant. The Scheffé procedure revealed that the scores on average for the variety of problems faced by beginning teachers who had studied at the University of Regina was significantly higher than the scores for beginning teachers who studied at either the University of Saskatchewan or, with the exception of the University of Alberta, at other institutions generally.

**Years of teaching experience**. The results of an ANOVA of problems experienced by beginning teachers classified according to the number of years of teaching experience are presented in Table 5.5. Three groups were used: respondents who had been teaching for between one and four years; respondents who had been teaching for between five and 10 years; and respondents who had been teaching for 11 or more years. The F ratio was significant at the level $p<0.05$. The Scheffé procedure revealed that beginning teachers who had between one and four years of experience

reported a significantly greater variety of problems within their classes than did teachers who had eleven or more years of experience.

Table 5.5
ANOVA of Problems Experienced by Beginning Teachers Classified According to their Years of Teaching Experience

| Years of Experience | N | Mean | Standard Deviation | F Ratio | Probability |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| a) 1-4 | 81 | 3.06 | .74 | | |
| b) 5-10 | 70 | 2.93 | .70 | 3.08 | 0.04 |
| c) 11 or more | 75 | 2.76 | .83 | | |

Significantly different means : a>c.

**Teacher languages**. An ANOVA of problems experienced by the respondents classified according to the number of languages spoken was performed on three groups: 133 respondents who were monolingual, 69 who were bilingual, and 22 who were multilingual. The analysis revealed no statistically significant differences between the groups.

**Ethnocultural similarity of teacher to students**. The results of a two-tailed *t* -test of problems experienced by beginning teachers classified according to their ethnocultural similarity to the majority of students taught are presented in Table 5.6. Two groups were used for this analysis: respondents who believed that they were ethnoculturally similar to the majority of their students whom they taught and respondents who believed that they were not similar to their students on this variable. The F value of 1.18 significant at $p<0.05$ indicated that the difference between the means was statistically significant.

Table 5.6
Two-tailed *t* -test of Problems Experienced by Beginning Teachers Classified According to Ethnocultural Similarity Between Teacher and Students

| Ethnocultural Similarity of Teachers and Students | N | Mean | Standard Deviation | Standard Error | F Value | DF | Probability |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| a) Yes | 140 | 2.84 | .77 | .07 | 1.18 | 222 | .03 |
| b) No | 84 | 3.07 | .71 | .08 | | | |

**Residence of teacher**. The results of the *t* -test of problems experienced by beginning teachers classified according to whether they lived in the same community as the majority of their students are presented in Table 5.7. The F value of 1.15 significant at $p<0.05$ indicated that the difference between the variety of problems reported by those teachers who lived in the same community as the majority of their students was significantly higher than that of teachers who did not live in the same community.

Table 5.7
Two-tailed *t* -test of Problems Experienced by Beginning Teachers Classified According to Place of Residence of Teacher

| Live in the Same Community | N | Mean | Standard Deviation | Standard Error | F Value | DF | Probability |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Yes | 97 | 3.06 | .73 | .07 | 1.15 | 221 | .02 |
| No | 126 | 2.82 | .78 | .07 | | | |

## Discussion

The statistical analyses of the data suggest that significant relationships exist between certain demographic variables and the variety of problems experienced by beginning teachers. These relationships were found to exist in seven particular areas.

### School Effectiveness

A negative relationship was found to exist between increased variety of problems experienced by beginning teachers and perceived ineffectiveness of their schools. Further investigation of the open-ended comments found that teachers in less effective schools tended to "let things slide a lot more" (081)[1] and accept as normal those activities which were not acceptable in the more effective schools.

This supports the contention of Levine and Lezotte (1995) that in unusually effective schools the control of instructional content and practice by the administration is high, with the opposite true in less effective schools. Researchers such as Slater and Teddlie (1992), Wang, Haertel, and Walberg (1994), and others, who have explored the area of effective schools in some detail, have noted that teachers in less effective schools become rapidly acculturated to the prevalent school norms and thus begin to accept behaviours and situations which otherwise would be unacceptable. The data from the present study appear to support this finding.

### Special Provisions for New Teachers

Similarly, a negative relationship was found to exist between the increased variety of problems experienced by beginning teachers and the amount of special provisions in the form of supplies, opportunities etc., that they received in their initial teaching year. The importance of providing additional release time for lesson planning, opportunities for enhanced collegial collaboration, and supplementary classroom resources to assist in the establishment of a new environment, have all been reported in the literature (e.g., Chester, 1992; Cole, 1990; Hale, 1992). The data emanating from the study would appear to support the contention that special provisions in the form of supportive supplies and opportunities, etc., to beginning teachers have the effect of minimizing the problems experienced by them during their first few years in the profession.

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[1] When anecdotal comments are reported in this study, an identification number is used to differentiate between informants while maintaining confidentiality.

**First Nations Schools**

The data suggest that more problems are experienced by beginning teachers employed in First Nations schools than by their counterparts in either public school district or school division and county schools ($p = .001$). There are many possible reasons for this finding, ranging from the culture shock experienced by new teachers when they first encounter an ethnoculturally different environment to what Haberman (1991) has termed a "pedagogy of poverty." This concept accepts that the mechanical and controlling functions of a teacher, those acts such as giving information and directions, giving assignments and tests, monitoring seatwork, settling disputes, punishing noncompliance, and so on, are a normal part of the daily routine. In certain environments, however, the day to day struggle with classroom control results in these being "taken together and performed to the systematic exclusion of other acts" (p. 291).

The data indicate that beginning teachers employed in isolated schools experienced a significantly greater variety of problems than was the case for those beginning teachers employed in both rural and urban schools ($p = .001$). As the majority of isolated schools serve a population which can be generally described as belonging to the lower socio-economic groups of society, so it is understandable that teachers in such schools experience more problems than their counterparts in either urban or rural settings. Such a finding is consistent with American research which explores education in the less populated areas of a state (e.g., Avery & Walker, 1993; Lomotey & Swanson, 1990).

In a Canadian context, Young (1991) noted that the region within which the school is located is one of the "five factors [that] become major determinants of who gets the best education and, conversely, who is failed by the education system" (p. 49). The other factors to which he refers are class, gender, ethnicity, and religion. As many isolated schools serve communities which are regionally isolated, ethnically marginalized, and predominantly part of the lower socio-economic class within Canadian society, so the environment within which teaching and learning occurs can be understood to be rife with potential problems.

In a discussion of the relationships between socio-economic class and success in school, Bennett and LeCompte (1990) observed that "class matters more than education, and even overrides the effects of education" (p. 171) in many situations, especially those where the teacher is from a different class group than the majority of the students. Avery and Walker (1993) noted that those beginning teachers who "have not had opportunities to develop awareness, knowledge, and skills in working with

diverse populations" (p. 29) tend to hold lower expectations for their students than beginning teachers in other environments. These class conflicts and lower expectations, together with the feeling of personal and professional isolation many respondents reported (e.g., 005, 061, 172), appear to result in the teacher having less self-confidence in the classroom and this, in turn, seems to lead them to experience a greater variety of problems than respondents in urban or rural milieux.

Respondents employed in First Nations schools generally reported fewer years of teaching experience than their counterparts in other schools, a finding which reflects the American experience reported by Pavel, Curtin, Christenson, and Rudes (1995). Further, as few respondents had been provided with the mandatory courses in First Nations culture, history, or philosophy recommended by Dickason (1992) and Warnica (1986), so they lacked awareness of issues relating to culturally appropriate teaching styles and so forth. As Knapp and Woolverton (1995) have observed, the fewer rewards for hard work and limited access to resources often found in First Nations schools leads to the formation of "a professional culture that discourages complex forms of teaching .... [As a result the] teachers gravitate to the least demanding forms of teaching (e.g., transmission teaching)" which, in turn, tend not to provide a satisfactory learning experience for the students. Subsequently the students, bored and alienated, begin to pose more problems for the beginning teacher than s/he would necessarily expect.

**Location of Teacher Education Program**

The findings of the study imply that beginning teachers who studied at the University of Regina experienced a greater variety of problems than those who studied at either the University of Saskatchewan or, with the exception of the University of Alberta, at other institutions generally ($p = .03$). The researcher was not able to locate any literature which addressed this issue. The finding is one which warrants further study in a more focussed investigation.

**Teaching Experience**

The data show that beginning teachers who had between one and four years of experience reported a significantly greater variety of problems than was the case for those teachers who had eleven or more years of experience ($p = .04$). This finding was expected, and supports other work in the area (e.g., Cooke & Pang, 1991; Lawton, 1987; Ratsoy, McEwen, & Caldwell, 1979). The fact that many experienced teachers are redeployed and thus new in the schools notwithstanding, it is a matter of common

sense to predict that respondents with over a decade of classroom teaching will report that they experienced fewer problems than their colleagues at the beginning of their professional life. This was indeed the case.

**Ethnocultural Similarity**

The results of the analyses suggest that those respondents who claimed that they were not ethnoculturally similar to the majority of their students reported experiencing a significantly greater variety of problems than those who believed that they were ethnoculturally similar to the majority of the students whom they taught ($p = .03$). Such a finding reflects suggestions in the literature that there is a need for teachers to be ethnoculturally compatible with the students whom they teach (e.g., Grant & Secada, 1990; Noley, 1991). However, as noted earlier, teachers tend to be drawn largely from a particular segment of society. Therefore, in an ethnoculturally diverse society, many will not be ethnoculturally compatible with the students they teach. Also, as LaCelle-Peterson and VanFossen (1995) observed, few teachers are provided with high levels of ethnocultural education in their preservice teacher preparation. As a result, many feel unprepared for teaching in multicultural contexts and this limited knowledge of ethnocultural diversity can lead to the experiencing of professional problems, particularly those concerned with student motivation and classroom control (Avery & Walker, 1993; Gonzalez, 1993). Although Smolkin, Suina, and Mercado (1995) have suggested the use of mentor-partnerships to address the issue of developing ethnocultural familiarity, such an initiative was not reported to be part of the preservice preparation of any respondent.

**Teacher Residence**

The data suggest that those respondents who lived in the same community as the majority of the students they taught experienced a greater variety of problems in the classroom than those beginning teachers who did not live in the same community as the majority of the students whom they taught ($p = .02$). At first glance, this finding contradicts the commonly held belief that successful teachers are or become part of the same community as the students with whom they work (e.g., Corson, 1991; Ramsey, 1987). On further reflection, however, it appears that the majority of those who live in the same community as the majority of their students do so from geographical necessity, not from choice. Hence those respondents from urban and rural environments tended not to live in the same community as the majority of their students whereas those from isolated communities had little or no choice in the matter. This

would suggest that those teachers who do live in the same community as the majority of their students should take steps to become involved in the life of that community.

### No Significant Relationship

The statistical analyses of the data suggest that no significant relationships existed between the other demographic variables and the variety of problems experienced by beginning teachers. The lack of a significant relationships was found to exist in five particular areas. These variables were the size of the school, the number of languages spoken by the students, the perceived ethnocultural mix of the classroom, the gender of the teacher, and the number of languages spoken by the teacher.

The researcher anticipated that monolingual teachers would experience a greater variety of problems than those who were bilingual or multilingual, and that teachers who were employed in ethnoculturally diverse classrooms would experience a greater variety of problems than those who taught in ethnoculturally homogeneous classrooms. This was not the case.

The findings also suggest that there is little or no difference in the variety of the problems experienced by male and female teachers. Further, the data indicate that a large student enrolment does not necessarily lead to a greater variety of problems experienced by a beginning teacher. These findings of the study are deserving of further inquiry and more focussed research.

## Conclusions

In order to address the extent to which the problems experienced by beginning teachers in ethnoculturally diverse classrooms differed from those experienced by beginning teachers generally, a scale was developed in order that the data might be better understood and described. The methods by which this scale was developed and the results of a number of statistical analyses have been reported earlier in this chapter, followed by a discussion of the findings during which the data were presented within the context of other studies.

The data suggest that the *types* of problem experienced by beginning teachers in ethnoculturally diverse classrooms were similar to those experienced by beginning teachers generally. However, it appeared that the *variety* of problems experienced was higher in a certain milieu. Specifically, beginning teachers who lived and taught in isolated First Nations schools, who were themselves not members of a First Nation, and who were not provided with higher levels of teaching resources, tended to

experience more problems than their counterparts in other milieux. The implications of this finding are further discussed elsewhere in the study.

# CHAPTER VI

## AN ETHNOCULTURAL FOCUS IN PRESERVICE TEACHER EDUCATION

In this chapter, the third research question of the study is addressed. This sought to determine the following:

> **To what extent did the beginning teachers in the selected schools receive an ethnocultural focus in their preservice teacher education program, and**
> **To what extent do they believe that an ethnocultural focus in their preservice teacher education programs would serve to prepare them to be effective teachers of ethnoculturally diverse and ethnoculturally different student populations?**

The data discussed in this chapter are presented in three sections. The first section relates to the existence of an ethnocultural focus in the preservice teacher education program experienced by the respondents, and to their beliefs as to the extent that such a focus should have been a part of that program. In the second section are presented qualitative data relevant to this research question. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the findings and attempts to answer the specific research question.

### Ethnocultural Focus in Preservice Teacher Education

As indicated in the methodology chapter, a scale was developed to identify and describe the ethnocultural focus in the preservice teacher education programs of the respondents. A second scale was developed to assess the preferences of respondents for an ethnocultural focus in preservice teacher education programs.

**Analysis of Responses**

The responses to the questionnaire had been coded on both ordinal and dichotomous scales (Youngman, 1979, pp. 7-9). For some items an ordinal or Likert-type scale had been used. Responses were coded from 1 to 5, where 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neither agree nor disagree, 4 = agree, and 5 = strongly agree. For other items a dichotomous yes/no response had been required. Over two thirds of the participants in the study indicated by their responses to the questionnaire that they had not received an ethnocultural focus in their preservice teacher education programs. Further, almost two thirds of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed with those questionnaire items which suggested that preservice teacher education programs should contain an ethnocultural focus. These responses imply that, in the opinions of a substantial majority of these respondents, an ethnocultural focus should be part of preservice teacher education programs generally but was perceived to be lacking in their own program.

**Preparatory Practices at the University Level**

The data reveal that 67.9% of respondents indicated that they did not receive an ethnocultural focus in their preservice teacher education program. Conversely, 83.2% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed with a statement asking whether they believed that such a focus should be part of preservice teacher education programs. It appeared that whereas the majority of respondents did not receive an ethnocultural focus in their preservice teacher education programs, a similar majority believed that such a focus should have been part of those programs. One respondent explained that "exposure and awareness to ethnocultural diversity should be a compulsory part of a teacher preparation program." (153)

A number of specific suggestions were offered in respect to how preservice teacher education could continue to change. Many respondents believed that their preservice programs had not accurately portrayed contemporary teaching situations. The need for an extended practicum to address this perceived weakness was often noted.

Respondents considered the practicum to be an integral part of preservice education. In addition to extending the length of the practicum, it was also suggested that student teachers be exposed to a variety of different ethnocultural milieux. A number of respondents observed that it was only through direct experience that student teachers could achieve the active awareness of ethnocultural difference referred to by Sikkema and Niyekawa (1987).

Other respondents stressed the need for student teachers to be exposed to a variety of practical situations through innovative practice outside the practicum. Hilary, one of the interviewees, had a quite specific suggestion:

> Organize seminars where real teachers actually come in and take you through a day in their life. Get a mix of teachers from the inner city and the middle class suburbs, fly in a teacher from an isolated school, bring in videos. That would be really helpful, to be able to ask questions.

The open-ended question responses and interviews suggested that universities involved in the preservice preparation of teachers could take a number of steps to facilitate improvement in the teaching of ethnoculturally diverse students. The first of these was that there should be an overall ethnocultural focus which permeates all aspects of preservice teacher education. Further, it was suggested that in some institutions there exists a tendency to restrict ethnocultural discourse to an examination of aboriginal issues. It was recommended that the courses and practica should recognize the ethnocultural diversity of Canada generally and should not be restricted to First Nations issues and experiences.

Some three quarters of the respondents, 75.4%, agreed with a statement which suggested that courses within preservice teacher education programs should provide teachers with a comprehensive understanding of ethnoculturally diverse learning styles. In the responses to the open-ended questions, several stated that these courses should allow teachers to develop the skills and strategies required to adapt their teaching styles to the various individual learning needs of ethnoculturally diverse students. Other respondents noted that courses in preservice education programs should also give teachers a comprehensive understanding of the differences in sociolinguistic development patterns among ethnoculturally diverse groups. Further to this, a number of respondents suggested that teachers be encouraged to acquire fluency in a second or third language, either prior to entering a preservice teacher education program or as a compulsory component of that program. Others also noted that preservice courses should recognize teacher mobility and therefore increase teacher knowledge of the structure, administration, and delivery of education in other provinces or jurisdictions.

**Difference Scores**

On the survey questionnaire which was distributed to respondents, almost identical wording was used for certain items on both the actual and preferred scales. The only difference was that items on the 'actual' scale were prefixed by "I was given" whereas items on the 'preferred' scale were prefixed by "new teachers should be given." The six scales involved were related to two topics, the existence of an ethnocultural focus in preservice teacher education programs and the existence of an ethnocultural focus in the initial inservice experiences of teachers.

A series of difference scores were calculated by summing the raw scores for responses to the relevant items on each scale and determining the mean score for that scale. The mean score for the 'actual' scale was then subtracted from the mean score for the 'preferred' scale. A positive difference would arise if the respondent reported that s/he believed that a preferred state of affairs would be to have had a high ethnocultural focus in the teacher education program under examination but also reported that their program did not have such a focus.

Conversely, a negative difference would arise if the respondent reported that s/he believed that a preferred state of affairs would have been not to have had such a focus but that they had in fact received a high ethnocultural focus in that particular teacher education program. The possible range for each of the difference scores was therefore from +4.00 to -4.00.

The difference scores for almost one third of the respondents (32.4%) were +3.00 and higher. In contrast, fewer than 10 percent of the difference scores were negative, the lowest being a single score of -2.00. The earlier analyses indicated that the majority of respondents did not have an ethnocultural focus in their preservice teacher education programs and also that the majority believed that they should have had such a focus. The direction and magnitude of the difference scores calculated here provides ample confirmation of the earlier results.

**Qualitative Analyses**

In this section of the chapter the anecdotal comments related to both parts of the third research question are reported. It was noted earlier that, when citing from comments made in response to the open-ended items on the questionnaire, an identification number was assigned to each respondent so as to maintain confidentiality. When excerpts from the eight interview transcripts are reported in this study the pseudonyms previously described have been employed. The confidentiality measures taken in the

data collection processes of this study resulted in there being no means of identifying individual respondents or of comparing the written comments of an individual with the interview transcript from that same individual. The finding that the majority of respondents believed an ethnocultural focus should be part of preservice teacher education programs generally, but was perceived to have been lacking in their own program, was supported by anecdotal comments which were written on the questionnaire. In the interviews which constituted the second phase of the data collection strategy, the validity of these findings was confirmed. The interviews also provided a more detailed description of issues perceived to be important in any discussion concerned with the preservice education of teachers.

**Themes**

Six themes emerged from the qualitative analysis. The first was a perception that the usefulness of the preservice teacher education program itself was somewhat limited. Within this theme were comments related to the primacy of the practica experiences over courses of study. A second theme was associated with First Nations education. While the study addressed issues of ethnocultural diversity generally, many of the respondents worked in schools which had a high enrolment of First Nations students. Their concerns and comments are reported as part of the second theme. The third theme addressed issues affiliated with the many stresses and constraints which teachers felt they faced, both in their preservice and inservice experiences.

The fourth theme arose out of responses from those who rejected the need for an ethnocultural focus in preservice teacher education, either because the respondent personally taught in an ethnoculturally homogeneous situation or because of a philosophical belief that the purpose of schools should be to embrace and enhance the status quo. In the fifth theme issues related to the changes which have occurred, and which continue to occur, in preservice teacher education were raised. Finally, suggestions concerned with how preservice teacher education programs might be further developed so as to include an ethnocultural focus identified the sixth theme.

**Theme 1: The primacy of practica.** There were recurring comments with respect to the usefulness of preservice teacher education programs generally. These often took a negative or critical tone. Comments ranged from "in many ways, my program did not prepare me for the reality of the classroom" (124) to "my education program was successful only in making me believe that Colleges of Education should be eliminated!" (067) Another respondent bemoaned the fact that "there wasn't much

taught in regards to the ethnocultural classroom." (055) This lack of exposure to ethnocultural issues was also addressed within the context of preservice teacher education generally:

> In general, I found a four year program did not adequately prepare me for teaching in any classroom -- diverse or not. More than 11 weeks out of four years should be spent in practicum experiences. If this were to happen, students could experience a wider sampling of the sociocultural makeup of our education system. (186)

This perceived need for a longer practicum component was supported by others. One respondent noted that "the only good education was the experience in the classroom. The in class education was useless." (115) Another reported that "most of what I learned about various ethnocultural groups in the classroom came from my practicum rounds, not the classes at the university. I learned from personal experience in the class or from discussion with other teachers." (177)

The practicum was also praised as an excellent means of experiencing ethnocultural diversity:

> I completed my last round [of practice teaching] in the Fort Vermilion School District. Not only were there farm children, but there were several Bands and a Mennonite colony in the area. I learned a lot from being in such a diverse cultural community. It was an enlightening and rewarding experience. (024)

Another respondent expanded on this theme:

> Ethnocultural diversity or any other aspect of teaching that concerns what one does when standing in front of 30 students, are things which I'm not sure can be TAUGHT to potential teachers. The only way to really understand about teaching is to DO it. I learned more about student diversity in those 2 1/2 months than I could in any university course and I did it without even really thinking about it. It just happens. For this reason, I think that teacher education programs should be considering EXTENDING practicum courses

> rather than creating new and mandatory university-based classes. I can understand that the sociocultural milieu of schools is changing, but I still say the best way to adapt is through practice, not more theory. (059) [Emphases in original]

Where respondents had received an ethnocultural focus in their preservice teacher education, it was often because they had taken the initiative. One noted that "I was given the opportunity to teach in a variety of ethnoculturally different schools because I requested specific communities which I knew to have such diversity of ethnocultural groups." (144) Another explained that, as university students, friends had set the agenda and taken steps to control their own learning:

> Most of the teacher training/learning of sociocultural and/or ethnocultural students and student learning were student driven, meaning that discussions were student driven and not teacher driven. Likewise the issues of student types and types of student learning were discussed separately. Therefore, it was up to the student to make the connections. (122)

The marginalization of ethnocultural issues appeared to be exacerbated by the low priority given to such courses. Even when courses were available, it was the student teachers who felt that they must take the initiative and select such courses to be part of their program. In many cases the student teachers reported that they only took those ethnocultural courses which were a required component of their program. One noted that "I took only one course [to do with ethnocultural issues]. If I remember correctly that particular course was compulsory. There were other courses available but I was an English major and was working in the area of reading instruction." (048) It would appear that this respondent was not made aware of the wide variety of literature in reading comprehension and instruction which is available, nor was he or she made aware of the ethnolinguistic literature on language acquisition.

Not all respondents appeared to be so limited in their outlook. One noted that "the University of Calgary offers several EDPA courses which do address cultural and minority issues. However, these courses are not compulsory. I took a few of these by choice." (043) John, the principal of a rural elementary school which serves an ethnoculturally diverse student population, commented that:

> I don't think, by and large, that teachers have any understanding of sociocultural political kinds of issues. . . . They're not very sophisticated in a lot of ways about their work. . . . They have something lacking in their teacher training, because you can't talk to them about those things; they don't understand what you're talking about. . . . I think they could be doing a lot more in their program. I mean, kids are coming out with B.Eds., but what do they have in that regard? Where do they get it? You can get it in some of your classes, but they are optional classes. You are already, to some extent, predisposed or else you wouldn't have taken those classes. It's like preaching to the converted. I think it should become . . . more of a compulsory component of teacher education.

One respondent noted that external events might generate discussion. For example,

> The ethnocultural diversity of schools was occasionally discussed over excited chatter following the first round of interviews with school boards visiting the campus. There was passing mention of classes in 'inner city' schools. In other words, there was no formal preparation for teaching in an ethnoculturally diverse classroom. (133)

Another respondent commented on the important role which can be played by local community members who are employed by the school. Often their influence is far greater than that of the professoriate involved in the formal preparation process:

> My teacher training to provide for students in an ethnocultural setting has been learned from short courses, inservices, conventions, occasionally elders, and often from contact with parents. I was fortunate that a teacher assistant I worked with in my first years at this school gave me much information and help. She was from the reserve that many of my students came from. I still have <u>much</u> to learn - I suspect that each community is very different and individual. (070) [Emphasis in original]

Indeed, the need for supportive colleagues and a learning community within the school were made evident by others. One respondent noted that "our training did not provide us with the general information that you learn on the job or through experience." (040) Another stated that "my teacher education program was poor to say the least. Much of what makes me a good teacher today was a result of hands on experience in the classroom and aid from and collaboration with colleagues." (065)

Generally, as one teacher stated, it was felt that "I don't think university prepares us for the 'real' teaching world. We are shown resources and ideas to use in an 'ideal' classroom when with budget cuts and lack of jobs we are faced with reality." (197) Hilary, a teacher in an isolated First Nations school with a K-10 program, agreed with the idea that teacher education programs are not really relevant to the real world of teaching. So did Steve, a teacher in a large rural K-6 school, who stated:

> Yeah. Well, mine wasn't really relevant. I remember, we spent ages doing a lesson plan; it ended up being about 13 pages, all nice and clear with objectives, materials, curricula links, and so on. I mean, 13 pages! I don't have the time for that. I needed to know how to write a lesson plan in 13 lines! They're so idealistic at the university, profs who haven't been in a classroom for 20 years and have this vague memory of what it used to be like. It's not like that any more. Heck, it's not even like it was six years ago, when I was at school.

Sue, who teaches at a small rural elementary and junior high school, was even more emphatic. She said that:

> When I was there, at university, it was an absolute joke. Arts classes taught me to be more educated about things, but the education program was a joke. We saw only textbooks, never curriculums. You need the latest curriculums in teacher education classrooms, nothing else is needed. Interns can be guided for classroom control, given shortcuts for better planning, to be better managers. As for me, I learned nothing. When I went in I was totally shocked. I didn't know what a register was, didn't know how to use it. The support wasn't there. We had a supervising professor, but he didn't care. Once I had to do an educational curriculum class, assess a reading series. I didn't know what was in a school. I picked a Ginn series, two days older than God, got an A! I have

> never seen the series since. Educational curriculum, math, . . . zippo. Best thing is the four month internship, the rest is useless.

Jenny, a teacher in a rural high school, also noted that many of the professoriate lack recent teaching experience. In addition, she commented on the discrepancy between the ideal as presented in the university and the actuality as experienced in the classroom:

> The student teachers need skills. We can teach them the shortcuts and the tricks, but they need skills. New teachers need classroom management skills. They still come out with this ideal, that the kids are all going to like learning and be just sitting there waiting to be taught. It's not like that any more. This is the same stuff I was taught at university. I think of these profs, they were there 20 years ago, when I was a student, and they're still there. New teachers also need to be able to adapt programs, both the curriculum and their expectations, especially for special needs students and for different ability levels. It's difficult for interns to make that adjustment, from the ideal they expect to the reality they get.

Not all respondents considered that the lack of an ethnocultural focus in their preservice teacher education had harmed their abilities as a teacher. As one explained:

> Though I have not received special attention in my courses with respect to ethnoculturally diverse classrooms, I have not felt myself to be inadequately prepared once in those settings. Verbally, in those situations, I have been told that child 'm' cannot eat pork or that child 'c' does not celebrate birthdays. The differences are respected, and the teaching goes on. (125)

This opinion, however, was very much in a minority. The majority view was reflected by another respondent:

> Too often what is taught at post-secondary educational institutions is either outdated or irrelevant. Ethnoculturally diverse classrooms are very prevalent and these should be addressed. Fortunately for our staff we have an

> ethnoculturally diverse staff who share ideas and concerns which help us to adapt our teaching styles. (162)

When asked whether her teacher education program provided her with an awareness of a variety of effective strategies to use in ethnoculturally diverse classrooms, Sue responded "Hah!" Jenny and Hilary both responded negatively to the question. Steve elaborated on his answer:

> No, not really. A couple of people in Educational Foundations kind of touched upon it, and I took a Native Studies class which gave me some information, but there was nothing particularly organized. It was kind of ad hoc -- if you looked for it, you could probably find it, but only in electives and nobody really gave much credit to those.

The general perception gleaned from these responses, therefore, was that many preservice teacher education programs do not prepare teachers sufficiently for the classroom. This is true in many areas, including classroom management, but is especially true insofar as the development of an ethnocultural awareness is concerned. The practicum experiences do provide some exposure to ethnoculturally diverse classrooms, but not on a regular basis and often only at the request of the student. It would appear that there is a great deal of potential for preservice teacher education programs to review their course offerings, to evaluate the recent classroom experiences of those teaching the courses, and to reframe the practica so that they better reflect teaching in ethnoculturally diverse classrooms.

**Theme 2: First Nations education**. Although not all respondents taught in Band operated schools, many had First Nations students in their classes. Some respondents had taken Native Education, Indian and Northern Studies, or similar courses while at university. Others expressed concern at what they perceived as a bias, in the questionnaire, towards First Nations generally and Native education issues specifically.

Those who had taken Native education courses within a general teacher education program expressed satisfaction with their experiences. One respondent noted that "I took an excellent course on First Nations education, and it was of great value to me, in

understanding that ethnodiversity does exist, and must be considered." (139) Another respondent agreed, albeit with reservations, noting that:

> My Native Education classes were excellent even though I didn't agree with everything my instructor said. I had already taught one year in a Native community and grew up next to a reserve where I spent a lot of time with friends.

The compulsory nature of some First Nations education courses drew comment from two respondents. For different reasons, each felt that such courses were of benefit. The first noted that there was almost a moral imperative that teachers know about First Nations issues, stating that:

> Natives are important to the history of Canada. Aboriginals require an education suited to their needs. Because of the Federal government's policy in isolating Aboriginals, teachers should be required to teach the differences between the two nations. (168)

The second respondent took a wider view when reflecting on personal experiences:

> The University of Saskatchewan education program made students take one Indian Education course during their schooling. However, this course gave us some basic information about First Nations people and the difficulties they have gone through. We were given some information on the differences between White and First Nations cultures. I feel there is a great need for more training on working with a different culture. I feel it should be compulsory to take more realistic courses. (079)

Some of those respondents who had experienced an Indian Teacher Education Program expressed a slightly different view. One noted that:

> I was in an Indian Teacher Education program for two years, then on campus. I tried to take as many courses on First Nations from the different disciplines as

> possible. I would have liked to take more on special needs as our student populations appear to have a lot. (087)

Another mentioned that "I was enrolled in the Indian Teacher Education Program at the University of Saskatchewan. Most of my classes were geared towards teaching Native children. Make that, some of my classes, not most of my classes." (094)

Three respondents described what they saw as a societal need for teachers to have an awareness of First Nations issues. One clarified earlier comments by noting that many still believe that the need for such an awareness

> would depend on if the teacher was willing to work or seek employment with a Band controlled school. The way things are progressing, I think <u>all</u> teachers should become involved in First Nations history regardless of where they plan on teaching. More and more First Nations students are in school. (137) [Emphasis in original]

A teacher in a Band operated school described her perception of the issues:

> This is a very good survey. I feel this whole area of ethnocultural diversity is just mentioned during the four-year teacher education program I received. It is very important that teachers have some knowledge of this area since many teachers convocating the last few years have to be willing to move to a Band controlled school if they want to teach! I found my first year very tough because I wasn't fully aware of what to expect. If I was given the opportunity to learn about this important area I would have had an easier time at adapting to the location and the people. However, I now really enjoy my second year teaching here. (091)

Another respondent, not in a Band operated school, offered similar sentiments with a caveat as to the role of the home in the educational process:

> Because of the close proximity of the Native children to the school in which I teach, I feel we as teachers, parents and students have always had [a] good rapport with each other. The students who perceive education as one of their

> best interests and regardless of their cultural background have never been a problem. I don't feel it is a teacher education program that is going to motivate the nature of those so inclined to follow the ills of society. What can teacher education offer to develop respect in an individual for themselves, others and society regardless of cultural background if a person chooses to be disrespectful? This kind of education begins in the home. Teachers need co-operation from parents and society! (074)

A number of other respondents, however, expressed concern at the idea of preservice teacher education programs focussing on First Nations issues to the exclusion of other ethnocultural issues. One noted that:

> I believe teachers should be able to relate to as many different cultures as possible, not just those of the First Nations. Perhaps a teacher completes the same education at the University of Saskatchewan as I have and the focus is on Native issues -- what then if that teacher ends up in a high oriental student body? (095)

This perspective was supported by a teacher with students from several ethnocultural backgrounds but none from a First Nation:

> Although my initial teacher education may have been inadequate to deal with cultural diversity in the classroom, any teacher education program which focused only on "First Nations" culture . . . would have been equally inadequate. The culturally diverse group of students I teach now contains no students of "First Nations" culture, but some from India, Pakistan, Chile, and Colombia. (136)

Another respondent commented:

> Although I was involved in courses that provided "cultural sensitivity", it was only limited to First Nations. I work in a school where the majority of students have come from a far- or mid- Eastern country. Very few speak any English. Therefore not only have I learned strategies for teaching ESL kids, I have also

> learned how to communicate with their non-English speaking parents. University did not help me with this. (154) [emphasis in original]

Some respondents argued that an ethnocultural focus in preservice teacher education would not be sufficient in and of itself. Rather, they stressed, the bulk of teacher learning takes place in the school and it is in that environment that support should be provided. One noted that "teachers, being teachers, are intrinsically aware of cultural differences and can react accordingly should they find themselves in an 'ethnoculturally diverse' milieux. If they need help they know where to get it (and they will get it)." (025) [emphasis in original]

Another respondent addressed both the problem of a restricted focus on First Nations issues and the need to recognize that teacher learning is a practical art.

> I think teachers should have training in some ethnoculturally diverse situations but I don't think it should take up a predominant portion of the training. First, I don't think much of it can be taught except for a few ideas. I think it has to be experienced and learned on the job. Second, the focus should not be just on Natives -- there are many minorities in Canada, all with different problems, so this would make it a waste of time focusing on just Native issues for a lot of teachers. (075)

The general perception obtained from these comments was that while respondents believed that new teachers should be made aware of issues affecting First Nations peoples, this should not happen at the expense of other ethnocultural groups. Indeed, one respondent expressed concern at the whole notion of ethnocultural differences, and suggested that:

> I'm hoping that "ethnocultural differences" includes differences in culture such as sexual orientation and gender as well as ethnic heritage. Text books, learning structures, teaching styles and strategies are all biased towards the white male heterosexual student. (085)

As noted in Chapter I, in using the term ethnocultural in the study this issue of inclusionary language has been addressed.

The general feeling generated by these responses is one which suggests an awareness of ethnocultural issues, tempered by a reluctance to focus on those issues related specifically to First Nations. There appears to be a concern that any focus on First Nations learning might overwhelm, or marginalize, any similar focus on the learning styles of other minority groups. The responses indicate a prevailing sense that preservice teachers should receive a broad exposure to, and gain some expertise in, strategies which would contribute to the more effective teaching of an ethnoculturally diverse population.

**Theme 3: Stresses and constraints**. A third theme to emerge indicated that teachers face a plethora of stresses and constraints in their work. These demands are so overwhelming that some respondents believe that any ethnocultural focus should be assimilated within a generic special education rubric. One respondent commented that:

> Education today is very demanding and stressful. We as teachers already have many areas that we need to be experts in. Adding more compulsory and specific compulsory courses means that other areas may then be considered less important. Let teachers continue to choose what may or may not be a specific need for them. (182)

Another noted that:

> Let's face it -- class sizes are up, teacher stress is up, special needs students are placed in regular programs. Special programs are being eliminated. We teach in English. If extra training is given as compulsory it should be in the area of dealing with special needs students and designing specialized curriculum and methods of instruction. (012)

The problems of trying to teach an ethnoculturally heterogeneous student body were cited by some respondents. One agreed with the need for ethnocultural awareness but complained that "in my classroom alone I would be dealing with nine different backgrounds (out of 23 children). I don't need extra work from what I'm already doing to adapt to their various learning needs." (107) [emphasis in original]

Another argued that:

> I believe my special education training prepared me for dealing with individual students and their varying needs better than other programs. Currently, I'm teaching an adaptation classroom with 13 students. All have different strengths, needs, and backgrounds. (064)

It was noted that the ability to include an ethnocultural focus in preservice teacher education might be constrained by the time available. The structure of the professional diploma/after degree [PD/AD] program was noted as hindering the development of an ethnocultural focus. One respondent observed that "in my case teacher training was brief, a one year PD/AD program, and perfunctory. Little concern was evidenced for multicultural education." (069) Another also commented on the fact that "this was a very compressed course with little time for the training you envisage." (161) A third noted, however, that the potential exists for an ethnocultural awareness to be developed as an adjunct to the program. This respondent commented that "my basic PD/AD program was not as useful to prepare me for a culturally diverse classroom. My education degree was taken with a diploma in ESL which was very useful." (114)

These responses suggest a frustration with the implication that an ethnocultural focus would result in additional compulsory courses. Those respondents who had completed a one year after degree teacher education program indicated that the time available was so limited that to require further courses would be impossible. There was a general sense that preservice education programs were already perceived to be the source of a great deal of "information overload", and there was a fear that an ethnocultural focus would result in an even greater workload.

**Theme 4: Rejecting ethnocultural focus in teacher education.** A number of respondents, based on their personal beliefs and experiences, rejected the need for an ethnocultural focus in preservice teacher education. As one said, "I have not taught in a school with diverse ethnocultural students. Therefore I do not feel that the above courses would have been useful in my situation." (105) Another, in a similar situation, did not agree with that perspective, explaining that "since I teach in a very homogeneous school, I haven't really needed this training, but I still would've liked to have been exposed to some of the above information." (166)

One respondent felt unable to offer an opinion, commenting that "I am not teaching in an ethnoculturally diverse classroom, nor have I ever, so I can't comment." (005) A

number of respondents (e.g., 063; 086) rejected the notion of making ethnocultural courses a compulsory part of preservice teacher education. One of these commented that:

> I do not think any ethnocultural courses should be compulsory, for two reasons. (1) An education student does not know where he/she will teach. Quite often in rural communities there is no cultural diversity. They are culturally homogeneous. (2) Ethnocultural sensitivity can not be taught in a classroom. Exposure to cultural variety produces sensitivity. A course cannot adequately prepare a teacher. (072)

The notion that this issue was idiosyncratic and could only be dealt with at the school level was also observed:

> I feel that if a problem exists within a school then that school can provide inservice education on the subject matter. Because each school is different I think it would be best to deal with such things at that time rather than in the preservice program when one cannot see the relevance of the issue. We have few minority cultures in our school and this is therefore not a concern. I find it no different than the fact we have different religions intermixed as well. (019)

This topic is addressed more fully in Chapter VII.

There were also those respondents who took an ethnocentric perspective. One argued that "I think we should be aware of their culture but we have a 'Canadian' curriculum and they must adapt with considerations on our part as teachers." (047) [emphasis in original]

Another took this further, noting that:

> I think public education should be attempting to find a common ground rather than trying to accommodate cultural differences. There are too many demands on a teacher's time as it is. Ethnocultural diversity should be dealt with in private schools. (101)

A perception of schools as a vehicle for the promotion of a uniform Canadian identity which assimilates other cultures was also stated:

> A limited emphasis should be placed on this area with the focus, societally, that other cultures should try to 'fit in' with the Canadian way -- if there is truly such a thing. Awareness is good; the tail wagging the dog is not. My education was not sufficient in the 'awareness department' but through inservice programs and experience I have gained a good deal of insight and practical ideas. I believe we, as teachers, should help all children feel comfortable in the classroom without altering the curriculum substantially. Private schools should provide for parents who wish a greater emphasis on their particular culture. (116)

It would appear that such perceptions perhaps ignore the fact that any 'Canadian way' which exists tends to be reflective of a Eurocentric cultural perspective.

The general perception gleaned from these responses is that many of the teachers who participated in the study do not accept the need for preservice teacher education programs to address issues of ethnocultural diversity. The reasons for this ranged from the opinion that ethnocultural sensitivity can only be developed through experience, not through courses, to the belief that as their schools were ethnoculturally homogeneous so a knowledge of ethnocultural diversity was irrelevant.

**Theme 5: Current and future changes**. As previously mentioned, a number of respondents were new to their particular school but not new to the profession. These respondents offered insights with respect to how preservice teacher education has changed over the years. One noted that:

> My first year was a long time ago and students have changed a lot. Parental expectations of students, teachers, and schools have also changed with a distinct shift away from parental responsibility. The schools are expected to do just about everything in the area which they teach. (173)

Another described a first year not that different from those experienced by many contemporary teachers:

> [It was] a long time ago, but I remember it was overwhelming and exhausting, but that's teaching. Over the years you change your attitude to handle the job, the job doesn't change. People change and adapt, become more confident and competent and experienced. If you don't, you don't survive! (062)

Some respondents reflected on how the practical experience of teaching resulted in them changing the approaches they had learned as part of their preservice teacher education:

> My first year of teaching, ironically, threw me into a diverse Indian, Métis, Lebanese, Ukrainian, and French Canadian community. It was necessary to understand and adapt to this milieu as quickly as possible. My teaching strategies altered dramatically to reflect the changed reality. (069)

Another respondent expressed some disdain at the type of supportive strategies being implemented by schools seeking to assist new teachers:

> My first year of teaching was in a small isolated Native community. I had K-5 in my class. [There was] very little English in my students' background. The most enjoyable year of my career. I don't agree with 'buddy' systems, etc. I find the setups phony and condescending to new teachers. I think that these relationships happen naturally. It is important that ALL teachers be there for each other. (080) [Emphasis in original]

This was not a widely held opinion. The general perception of respondents was reflected by one who noted that "I think that beginning teachers are FAR better prepared than I ever was! I am basing this on what I see my daughter doing during and in preparation for her internship." (070) [Emphasis in original]

These comments generally suggest that more experienced teachers are somewhat less critical of contemporary preservice teacher education programs than their less experienced colleagues. The respondents generally observed that preservice teacher education had changed, and should continue to change, in order to meet the changing needs of the schools. It was noted, and not always in positive terms, that many new ideas were being implemented to assist beginning teachers to adjust to the profession.

While some of these strategies were considered to be artificial there was, overall, a sense that contemporary preservice education programs had a stronger relationship to the "best practice" ideas identified in the research than had been the case in the past.

**Theme 6: Developing an ethnocultural focus**. Many respondents were able to offer specific suggestions as to how preservice teacher education could continue to change. One noted that "if teachers want to be more effective, their training should include courses which develop awareness [and] sensitivity to ethnocultural diversity since classroom composition is becoming more and more culturally heterogeneous." (127) Another observed that "any program must be designed to be immediately useful and applicable to everyday classroom needs. Not a lot of theory." (033) [Emphases in original]

There was some disagreement on whether "there should be one mandatory preservice teacher education course that deals with [ethnocultural diversity]" (027) or whether "training should be during the teaching experiences with different ethnocultural groups. It would then be more meaningful and relevant." (046) One respondent believed that "Yes, I feel it is important to make future educators aware of the ethnocultural diversities in our population of students. BUT not as a stand alone course -- rather, as a unit within a course dealing with all cultural differences." (118) [Emphases in original]

The problem with this approach is that it may become dependent on the willingness and ability of the instructor to ensure that ethnocultural issues are integrated into the program. As one teacher observed:

> I don't feel I had any solid education about how to teach to ethnocultural diversity. To add to that, I don't feel I had any solid education concerning cultural sensitivity and knowledge. Yes, some instructors 'touched' on this but by no means educated us about it. (189)

Again, respondents stressed the practical nature of learning to be an effective teacher. Some observed that teacher education should not be viewed as a finite process. Rather, as one noted, "teacher education should be on-going with programs every few years to hold a license." (078) Another commented that "I appreciate this

ethnocultural thrust which was never part of my formal education but has been a part of my personal education throughout my teaching years." (148)

Some respondents suggested that the topic of ethnocultural awareness should be included within the broader university community. One noted that:

> Perhaps it would be better if all educated students, all university graduates, had a pre-requisite course in the history and culture of the ethnic groups that make up Canada to promote appreciation of all different groups in society. There is a narrow mindedness in business graduates, engineering and science graduates as well as in some arts graduates that makes Canadian society less productive than it could be. (096) [Emphases in original]

One respondent questioned the ability of the professional component of a preservice teacher education program to raise ethnocultural awareness. He commented that:

> I took an 'anthropology and education' class as well as Canadian studies, world religion, and anthropology classes. These were not all required courses but have been my best preparation for dealing with a multicultural classroom. My arts courses did more for me than my education classes did. (058)

Another respondent also mentioned the value of an arts degree:

> Because of the fact that I graduated from an Arts Education program there was built in a component which examined cultural-historical perspectives. The weakness was in the fact that there was a scarcity of information or resource people which clearly articulated the uniqueness or similarities between various cultural groups. The arts enable one to transcend typical language systems to validate all forms of human expression. (016)

Throughout these responses there permeates a sense of contradiction with earlier comments. Taken generally, it appears that respondents believe there is a need for an ethnocultural focus in preservice teacher education programs. What remains unclear is whether respondents believe that this focus should be a compulsory part of the professional component. Several of these respondents suggested that courses in the

Faculty of Arts have been more useful in developing ethnocultural awareness than similar courses within Faculties of Education. It would appear that respondents believe Faculties of Education must either revise their curricula or else embrace more arts courses as part of the preservice teacher education program.

## Discussion

In a sense, the fact that so many respondents rejected the need for an ethnocultural focus in preservice teacher education programs may be a commentary on the angst felt by many Anglos as they experience an increasingly ethnoculturally diverse country. There appears to be a sense that the schools should reflect the status quo of the majority culture, with all its connotations of white cultural superiority, and that those who prefer alternative approaches should be responsible for meeting such needs. That these perceptions exist amongst respondents who have been identified as being teachers of ethnoculturally diverse and ethnoculturally different student populations may be cause for some concern.

It is apparent that the development of an ethnocultural focus in teacher education need not be restricted to a specific course within the professional education component. Rather, courses in other areas of the program might also benefit from a change in emphasis. Respondents perceive that the stresses faced by teachers during their initial years in the profession do not dissipate over time. As teaching is becoming a more complex task within an increasingly demanding world, so is the understanding that the need for teachers to develop an awareness of ethnocultural issues should not be restricted to a particular course or unit within a course but should permeate through all aspects of the preservice education program.

## Conclusions

In this chapter, data were presented which related to the existence of an ethnocultural focus in the preservice teacher education programs experienced by respondents. A variety of both quantitative and qualitative data were analyzed and presented.

The statistical data indicated that over two thirds of the participants in the study believed that they had not received an ethnocultural focus in their preservice teacher education programs. Further, almost two thirds of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed with those questionnaire items which suggested that preservice teacher education programs should contain an ethnocultural focus. These responses imply that, in the opinions of a substantial majority of these respondents, an ethnocultural focus should be part of preservice teacher education programs generally but was perceived to be

lacking in their own program. Following further exploration, through the interviews and a qualitative analysis of open-ended items on the questionnaire, this implication was affirmed.

Many of the teachers in this study perceived their practicum experiences to be more valuable than the academic courses which constituted their programs of study. It was recommended that practica be reframed so as to provide experience in ethnoculturally diverse classrooms. Further, it was suggested by many respondents that courses with an ethnocultural focus become a compulsory, rather than optional, component of preservice teacher education. There was not unanimity on this point, as some respondents believed that issues related to ethnocultural awareness must be experienced directly and could not be taught as part of a university course.

These issues, together with those related to special needs education, classroom management, and the teaching of English as a Second Language, were considered to be vital factors for the preparation of effective teachers. It was observed by many respondents that such themes should permeate through all aspects of the preservice education of teachers and not be limited to specific courses.

In addition to revising preservice teacher education programs to reflect the contemporary realities of schools, it was suggested that the classroom experiences of those who teach such programs should be evaluated. The majority of respondents considered it to be important that neophyte teachers are provided with information pertaining to the 'real' world of current classrooms and not to some mythical 'ideal' classroom which, if it existed at all, did so in the past.

In this chapter the third specific research question of the study has been addressed. It was determined that the majority of the beginning teachers involved in the study considered that they had not received an ethnocultural focus in their preservice teacher education program. Further, it was determined that the majority of these respondents believed that an ethnocultural focus in their preservice teacher education programs would have served to prepare them to be more effective teachers of ethnoculturally diverse and ethnoculturally different student populations.

# CHAPTER VII

## ETHNOCULTURAL FOCUS IN INSERVICE TEACHER EDUCATION

In this chapter, the fourth research question of the study is addressed. This sought to determine the following:

> **To what extent did the beginning teachers in the selected schools receive an ethnocultural focus in their inservice teacher education program, and**
> **To what extent do these teachers believe that an ethnocultural focus in their inservice programs would serve to prepare them to be effective teachers of ethnoculturally diverse and ethnoculturally different student populations?**

This chapter has three sections. The first section reports the findings related to the degree of ethnocultural focus in their inservice teacher education programs as experienced by the respondents, and the extent to which they indicated that such a focus should have been a part of their inservice experiences. In the second section are presented qualitative data relevant to the this research question. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the findings and an attempt to answer the research question.

### Ethnocultural Focus in Teacher Inservice Programs

As indicated in the methodology chapter, three scales were developed to assess the degree of ethnocultural focus in teacher inservice programs. The first scale dealt with items related to the actual and preferred experiences of respondents during their period of orientation to the new school. The second consisted of items which addressed issues of ethnocultural diversity at the school level. The third scale was concerned with items which addressed issues of ethnocultural diversity in the respondents' classrooms.

### Preparatory Practices at the School Level

The responses to the questionnaires showed that, as new members of staff, only 28.1% of respondents experienced any form of planned orientation to the school and community. Conversely, 84.8% of respondents believed that such an orientation should have been provided for them and recommended that it be provided for other

novice teachers in the future. The data also revealed that 68.6% of respondents identified a need for an ethnocultural focus in their initial inservice experiences, and 87.5% for an orientation period which provided specific information about effective teaching strategies which were compatible with the distinct learning styles of the children in the school. These findings are presented in six subsections related to the orientation period itself, the support provided to new teachers by school administrators, the provision of resources and planning time, the existence of a formal mentor program, and the general level of support from other staff received by the beginning teachers in the study.

**Preferred Orientation Practices**

Once teachers were employed in the schools, there appeared to be a need for a planned period of orientation to the school and the community. However, of the 81 respondents who reported experiencing a planned period of orientation, the responses revealed that their experiences were not uniform.

It appeared that fewer than one third (28.4%) believed that they did experience such practices during their orientation period, one third (34.6%) believed that they did not experience such practices, and the remainder (37%) appeared to be unclear as to whether or not they experienced such practices during their orientation period. Conversely, almost three quarters (73.7%) of the total group of respondents indicated that they agreed or strongly agreed that planned activities related to the development of ethnocultural awareness should be part of the orientation process for new teachers.

One of the interviewees, Hilary, observed that "there must be a good orientation before school actually starts" and another respondent noted the need for "a planned orientation that is comprehensive and includes various spiritual and ceremonial activities." (027) That the orientation should be a forum for reviewing school discipline practices was supported by 95.5% of respondents. In addition, 92.3% of respondents agreed that the orientation period should include the opportunity to review standard school operating procedures and 87% stated that this review should include an examination of the school policy manual.

**Addressing Ethnocultural Diversity at the School Level**

Of the 228 respondents to items included on this scale, over two thirds (69.6%) indicated that in their experience issues of ethnocultural diversity were not addressed at the school level. Teachers who participated in the study suggested, in their responses

to open-ended items, that such issues could be included as part of a planned inservice program. These comments are reported elsewhere in this study.

The administrative staff of the school were seen to have an important role to play in the preparation of new teachers. At his interview, Brian agreed that school administrators should provide support to new teachers but also noted that:

> You know, I think that teachers are being prepared as well as they can, and we do our part. But I think what it comes down to, the basic thing is either a person can develop into a good teacher or cannot develop into a good teacher. Those that see that on their own should leave, and most of them do. Those that don't see it on their own should be encouraged to either improve or look elsewhere.

A number of respondents disliked what they perceived as the somewhat cavalier attitude of certain administrators. One noted that "teaching is very rewarding but lack of consistent school discipline and poor administrative support and politics and little planning time leave little energy for teaching." (043) Another stressed the need for teachers to "be given support by administration in first year, not left to sink or swim." (153) One quarter, 25.4%, of respondents indicated that in their first year of teaching they experienced what they considered to be a low level of support from their principal. Within the arena of support which could be offered by the administration were issues pertaining to resources, planning time, and the provision of a mentoring program.

**Addressing Ethnocultural Diversity at the Classroom Level**

The items on this scale described the respondents' practices in their interactions with ethnoculturally diverse students, particularly those for whom English was a second language or dialect (ESL/ESD). In the schools where respondents felt that teachers exhibited similar expectations as to what constituted acceptable or unacceptable behaviour by students, then respondents claimed that they tended to adjust their marking and assessment practices to account for non-standard English and the needs of ESL/ESD learners. In the schools where respondents felt that teachers did not share these common expectations, however, such adjustment was not usually reported. Approximately one quarter (24.7%) of the respondents indicated that issues of ethnocultural diversity were not addressed at the classroom level and, in their anecdotal

responses, suggested that this was a topic suitable for inclusion as part of a planned inservice program.

**Resources.** A considerable number of respondents stated that many teachers, whether veteran or neophyte, were not receiving the resources necessary for them to teach in an optimal fashion. One respondent suggested that administrators should "never mind additional resources, make sure new teachers have what they need; worry about the basics first!" (118) Almost half, 46.5%, of respondents indicated that new teachers, in comparison with continuing teachers at the school, should be given additional resources to equip their classroom. Only 9.5% reported that they had actually received such additional resources as part of their own experience. Others suggested that all teachers need more resources than commonly available in many schools. An experienced teacher commented that "resources are good but I am always in want of more, be they materials, a teacher aide, or volunteers." (180) Over one third, 39.2%, of respondents referred to the fact that as neophyte teachers they had received special workshops and inservice programs which were developed specifically for their needs. Further, 83.5% of respondents believed that such workshops and inservice programs should be provided to beginning teachers.

**Planning time.** Many respondents noted that all teachers need planning time, and that innovative ways of using this time could be beneficial to new teachers. Slightly more than half the respondents, 50.5%, agreed that beginning teachers should be given extra planning time above that available to all staff. Only 5% of respondents reported that they had personally received extra time for planning. One respondent suggested that "perhaps extra planning time WITH an experienced teacher would be beneficial." (186) [Emphasis in original] Jenny reported that it would be useful to have "more preparation time if at all possible, and also use that time to observe more experienced teachers, get familiar with different styles," a position supported by a respondent who felt that the "observation of experienced teachers by new teachers is essential. It is not done nearly enough." (099) Others, however, noted that many schools are being required to reduce the amount of non-instructional contact time they can offer to their staff. A small number of respondents did not agree with the focus on planning, believing that "instead of extra planning time, peer coaching is better." (118) Indeed, although 19.5% of respondents indicated that during their first year of teaching they had received the opportunity to observe other teachers, 92.4% stated that this opportunity should be available to all new teachers.

**Mentor program.** The notion of a designated mentor program was generally well supported. Almost one fifth (19.5%) of respondents reported that they had received the opportunity to choose a 'buddy' who would act as a mentor during the first year. Further, 91.5% of respondents believed that all new teachers should have this opportunity. Drawing on their own experiences, particular respondents observed that "I would have liked to have had a mentor to discuss my experiences with" (138) and "the first two months were especially difficult, a mentor would have been great to answer questions." (139)

One respondent stated that "I feel a mentor program would be wonderful" (063) while others had specific suggestions. Hilary thought that it would be useful to have "support groups, with senior teachers paired up with new teachers," while another beginning teacher suggested that new teachers should be encouraged to "buddy up with a 'master' teacher in the first year" (153) as a means of better understanding the operations of the school.

Jenny, a teacher who had recently moved from an elementary school to a school which offered a program to grades 7 through 12, offered some cautions about the mentoring process:

> A mentoring system can't be set up, it has to happen naturally. New teachers tend to end up with an older teacher anyway. But you have to be careful if you are going to organize something. Those who are keen to be mentors may not be the best for the role.

**Staff support.** In the opinion of many respondents, the whole staff must take part of the responsibility and initiative for providing new teachers with a supportive environment. One reported that "I believe it is very important for a first year teacher to get the FULL support from his/her staff." (092) [Emphasis in original] Another observed that "it's very important to get as much information as you can from the other teachers who are willing to share their ideas. Everyone seems to shut the door and cover the windows with paper." (098)

Steve, a teacher in a rural elementary school, noted that in his opinion many veteran teachers did not receive much support in their beginning years in the profession. It was important, he believed, that they view these experiences as ones to avoid, rather than emulate, in their dealings with beginning teachers. The data reveal that while 94.2% of

respondents agreed that new teachers should receive opportunities for support and collaboration from their more experienced colleagues, over half (51.6%) reported that they had indeed received such support.

## Qualitative Analyses

In this section of the chapter the anecdotal comments related to both parts of the fourth research question are reported. These comments were obtained from responses to the open-ended questions on the survey instrument and from responses to the interview questions.

As discussed earlier, identification numbers were used with the questionnaires and pseudonyms with the interview responses in order to maintain confidentiality. The finding that a majority of the respondents believed an ethnocultural focus should be part of inservice teacher education programs generally, but was lacking in their own program, was supported by anecdotal comments in the questionnaires. In the interviews which constituted the second phase of the data collection strategy, the validity of the finding was confirmed. The interviews also provided a more detailed description of these issues concerned with the inservice experiences of teachers.

### Themes

Ten themes became evident from the analysis of the qualitative data. The first was a perception that the hiring process itself did make a difference to new teachers. Within this theme were comments related to the difficulties experienced when a teacher was not recruited until late in the year. A second theme was related to the notion of an internship year for new teachers. Again, the overwhelming perception of respondents appeared to be that there was a need for entry to the profession to be made a less threatening experience.

The first year itself received a great deal of comment and from the responses emerged four themes in addition to the two already described. The third theme was related to positive or 'good' experiences received during that first year and the fourth theme to the negative experiences. The fifth theme expanded upon a specific negative experience, the overload often experienced by first year teachers. Within this theme the age and energy levels of older teachers were discussed. The sixth theme was related to informing new teachers of their responsibilities and of the support mechanisms which were in place.

A seventh theme addressed issues of ethnocultural diversity generally, while the eighth theme was specifically concerned with the experiences of new teachers in a First

Nations educational context. Emerging as the ninth theme was the role which parents can play in making the life of a first year teacher less stressful. The tenth theme was a litany of helpful practices experienced by respondents when they were beginning their careers. Some additional reactions in the form of suggestions were made and these are reported in Chapter IX. A number of the respondents indicated that they believed that these suggestions would, if implemented, improve the initial inservice experiences of new teachers.

**Theme 1: The hiring process**. The need for the hiring process to be a considered and reflective introduction to the new position was often stressed. Steve, a teacher in a rural elementary school, commented that "we need to stress what it is really going to be like, for a new teacher. They have this rose-coloured ideal and you want to shake them, say wake up, forget all that university stuff!" Hilary, who teaches in an isolated First Nations school, observed that "stress management workshops should be offered to new teachers as soon as they are hired." This was considered to be especially the case for teachers who were hired during the summer. The sense of rushing around experienced by teachers recruited to fill last minute vacancies was palpable, and was exacerbated when the school served an ethnoculturally different population. As one respondent observed:

> I felt completely bombarded! I found out I had the job eight days before school started and I needed to be very organized. This has been a 'cultural challenge' for me and I spend many hours planning and marking. Even though I had studied about the Hutterites, I found that they have very different focuses towards education. The 'centers, themes, and portfolios' which I learned enhanced student learning are now replaced by workbooks, phonics, and comprehension questions. I needed to re-evaluate my teaching. (197)

Another explained how her recruitment experience had influenced her classroom practice:

> I was hired for my position on August 26 and began teaching on August 29. The classroom is made up of 12 Special Needs students. Classroom management is probably my main focus this first year. The school is over 60% native population but has no ESL program. (172)

Tracy, who teaches in a small, isolated, multigraded, First Nations elementary school, commented that "I was hired in mid-September, to replace someone who just never turned up. I asked for an orientation but it wasn't really possible. I arrived on Friday and was in the classroom that afternoon." Such realities make it very difficult for schools to provide new teachers with the support and encouragement they appear to require.

Brian, principal of a First Nations school in a fly-in community, noted that geographical and financial restraints sometimes made it difficult to provide a comprehensive orientation process:

> You're straight in. You get off the plane and you're at work the next morning. And in two days you're faced with a classroom full of students. And there's very little you can do to change that, given the situation where we have to fly our staff in. Teachers find that very hard. Like, even flying in after Christmas, they fly in Sunday night. . . . They want to be with their family, the teachers want to be with their families and friends, you know, as much as possible, so they fly in on Sunday and teach on Monday morning. It's very difficult. The orientation, it's on the job training, you learn as you go. You learn from speaking with the other teachers who have been here a while and it's constantly changing, you change from a learner to a teacher in a couple of years up here. Because, after a couple or three years, you're a veteran. It's not like your mentor is somebody who has been teaching for 20 or 25 years. You're walking in and your mentor might be two or three years out of the university education program. So there's very little time given to orientation.

Brian also questioned whether the provision of a comprehensive orientation would in fact be of any practical use to teachers in his school. He observed:

> In an ideal world it would be great if we could have all our staff up here a week ahead of time for orientation, preparation, and whatnot. But I think that the shock of the system, that is, the reality of the situation is that probably new staff wouldn't believe us if we told them anyway. You know, most teachers don't start off teaching with the idea that they're going to be teaching students who

> speak a different language from them, unless they have trained to teach French or to teach Spanish. Most of them just assume that they're going to be teaching in an environment similar to their own, and then all of a sudden they're 700 miles north and teaching in a totally different culture, where the language is different, and they almost have to experience that on their own. I don't know how I could prepare them sufficiently enough that they would appreciate that full week of orientation.

At the other extreme is the very positive experience of another respondent, who was recruited prior to the end of the preceding school year, received a comprehensive orientation, and was generally encouraged by her experiences.

> I was interviewed by the principal, a teacher, and a student. I was invited to the school for an orientation in June prior to my commencement the following September. I was also given the June newsletter, and students toured me around the school. I was assigned a 'senior buddy' to help me during my first year at the school. The principal is extremely supportive of her staff and has high expectations for students and staff. All these things have made my teaching experience at my present school a positive and enriching one. More schools should try to offer these things. (177)

Indeed. However for many schools it appears that the constraints of geographical distance and restricted funding resources, and the inability to accurately predict staff vacancies until the beginning of the school year, all contribute to a sense of reactive rather than proactive policy with respect to teacher recruitment and orientation.

**Theme 2: An internship year**. Irrespective of the type of hiring process followed, a number of respondents noted that the first year could be made less stressful for teachers. One suggested means by which this could be achieved was through the introduction of an internship program. Noting that beginning teachers are constantly being evaluated for possible tenure within the system, one teacher observed:

> The first year is perhaps the most difficult year. It is unfortunate that everything is based on the first year of performance. The great stress that first year teachers are under is unbelievable. Greater support is needed. I do like the

> concept of an internship - a SLOW year to get into the system. (182) [Emphasis in original]

A second respondent noted that:

> In my first year, I felt out of my league, not at all equipped for the class I had. Fortunately I learned from that first year and continued on to a successful year. Why not ONE FULL YEAR of internship before graduating??? (124) [Emphases in original]

A third commented that:

> Probably the best system would be a LONGER apprenticeship program (like a co-op system) in a REAL SCHOOL where the variety of the experience would make the learning about rules, procedures, etc., more meaningful and more easily remembered because the learning was relevant. (096) [Emphases in original]

Those respondents who were new to their school but not to the profession recalled the period when such a program was in place. As one observed, "I participated in the Intern program and found it extremely valuable. I believe it should be brought back and that all first year teachers should be involved." (073) These opinions are similar to those recounted by participants in studies which specifically addressed the issue of an internship (e.g., Girad, 1973; Holdaway, Johnson, Ratsoy, & Friesen, 1994; North Carolina, 1985). In many jurisdictions, however, fiscal realities are such that pedagogically important innovations like an internship program for teachers can not be implemented due to financial limitations.

**Theme 3: A positive first year**. The first year was not stressful for all respondents. This was usually due to external influences. One respondent declared that "my first year was at the Edmonton Institution, a maximum security prison. I didn't have to deal with parents, and there was no problem with classroom control. Adults don't pose much of a problem." (024) Another noted that "my first year of teaching was a very rewarding and successful opportunity due to the fact that the staff

was helpful and supportive." (130) A third simply described her first year as "enjoyable!" (027)

Such opinions, however, constituted a minority. There were very few respondents who provided such positive comments. Among those who did were a number who had resorted to unorthodox means in order to reduce the stress that they experienced. This required them to reduce their level of contact with that activity which was perceived to be causing the stress, specifically through reducing the amount of their teaching. One noted that "I taught half time, therefore preparation was less and time was not as much of a problem." (033) Another commented that "I had to teach part time in my first few years to alleviate some of the problems associated with being a first year teacher." (179) The majority of respondents, however, described the difficulties they had faced in establishing themselves within their school and profession.

**Theme 4: A negative first year**. When asked to comment on their first year of teaching, most respondents used terms similar to the one who noted that "I'd like to forget it ever happened!" (097) The blame for this disastrous first year was evenly placed on the universities, the schools, and the teachers themselves.

The perception that preservice teacher education programs did not adequately prepare teachers for their new roles in the classrooms was strongly stated. One respondent noted:

> My first year was part-time. I found it extremely difficult because the discipline methods I NOW have learned were not there. I came close to quitting. The university does not do an adequate job of training teachers in this area. It was all 'learn as you go on the job'. More PRACTICAL is needed and LESS theory. (055) [Emphases in original]

Another was even more scathing of the preservice program:

> My first year of teaching was so difficult that I thought of resigning my position. My administrator and colleagues were very supportive and helpful. The University of XXX did not provide an adequate program for preparing me or my colleagues for the classroom of the 1990s. In short, the professional program I took did not adequately prepare me for my professional duties. (065)

Other respondents felt that the school had not played a properly supportive role during their first year in the profession. One observed:

> My first year of teaching was tough. I spent the first two and a half months, a half semester, with NO planning time (i.e., no preps at all, never mind EXTRA). I was just trying to survive as I'm sure are most first year teachers. I didn't have time to consider ethnocultural diversity! First year teachers need a good orientation to the school (i.e., attendance/discipline policies, how do I get photocopying done?, what does the library have to offer?, etc.) These are things that CAN be and need to be shown to teachers to make their lives easier. (059) [Emphases in original]

Another commented:

> I found first year and even this second year to be somewhat frustrating as demands on a teacher's time are high. All teachers are expected to carry a full load, plus be involved in many extra-curricula activities and on NUMEROUS committees, regardless of their years of experience. I find that non-instructional activities take up a better percentage of my time. I know I am good at what I do, otherwise I would not have been hired in this climate. However, I, like many teachers, am thinking of leaving this field. (122) [Emphasis in original]

Others respondents were not so confident of their own skills:

> It is very difficult. You do not want to appear that you are unsure, so you don't ask for help as much as you probably should. There is such a lack of materials, I find that I am trying to reinvent everything. I work very late. I love teaching despite all of this. (030)

Sometimes the principal was held responsible. One respondent said that "I feel that our principal does not have enough classroom experience to be able to help teachers with teaching and learning techniques." (094) Another commented:

> I trained as a secondary language/learning abilities teacher and was placed in a K-3 split classroom for half the day. It was tiny, 36 students and 2.5 staff. The parents and teachers were great. The principal was a second year teacher himself. It was hell. (005)

Tracy described a similar experience:

> In my first year, as I said, I was hired late and started work the day I arrived. I trained as a special education teacher, and I expected to be involved in the resource room and in the development of individual education plans, stuff like that. My first afternoon, I was told I was only going to be half-time special needs, and the rest I would be kindergarten. None of the kids spoke English, I didn't understand Dene. There was no teacher aide because the principal wanted the kids to learn English. It was nuts, and stayed like that all year. I left.

Hilary also complained about the fact that a lack of preparation for the problems of a contemporary classroom can be exacerbated by an unthinking principal:

> I was given a terrible class. It was supposed to be grade 2, but some kids had been there for three years, and that after two or three years in grade 1! It was so violent, all these 11 and 12 year olds who were so angry and frustrated. I tried to talk to the principal but he just kept on saying that he didn't believe in social promotion. There was so much anger, and then the kids wouldn't be passed on because they had been misbehaving! It didn't seem to matter whether they knew the material or not. There was no discipline policy in the school, and my whole life was one form of classroom management issue after another.

Despite all these negatives, there remained a resilience about teachers. As one respondent noted about the first year, "I'm in it. It's stressful. What else is new? I knew it would be, so I'm not surprised." (058) Another could offer little hope for neophytes. "Every time I change grade levels or programs or schools or principals, it feels like my first year of teaching again." (133) Related to all these issues was the

underlying expectation that first year teachers are expected to be as competent and skilled as their more experienced colleagues.

**Theme 5: First year overload**. The commonly held idea that new teachers are generally and routinely given the worst students and the worst timetable was not fully endorsed. One respondent did state that:

> It is much too common to give neophyte teachers the most difficult kids. For example, at high school have a new teacher teach drama, electronics, and a bunch of 3 credit courses, so you never got to know names, to non-academic or behaviour problem kids. At junior high, you get to teach elective courses, which kids know don't count. This recurring pattern is a recipe for disaster. (153)

Another noted that:

> I had to work extremely hard my first year because experienced teachers would not share materials or information with me. I think they felt they had to go through the process and I had to do it too, on my own -- 'baptism by fire'. Near the end of the year, once I had 'proven' myself, some teachers began to share, generally the younger teachers. (177)

Generally, however, the majority of respondents shared Tracy's opinion that "I've heard it happens but it doesn't here," or Sue's feeling that "in my school, now, no, that doesn't happen. It used to be like that a bit, but not any more." Jenny noted that:

> the new teachers don't get the worst classrooms and students, but they do get more difficult timetables. They tend to get the odds and ends, more of a hodgepodge. We have one who teaches industrial arts, social studies, science, and math, all in his first year. He was the last one hired, so he got what was left.

This 'hodgepodge' of subjects had been the bane of one teacher's first year:

> In general there is too little time and too much to do. In an eight day rotation I have only eight 45 minute preparation periods. I teach two Science 10 modified; one Science 10 academic; two Math 10 modified; one Math 10 academic; one Chemistry 20; one class which includes Math 10 academic, Math 20 modified, Math 20 academic, and Math 30 academic. There is very little support or preparation from administration to deal with this. (043)

One respondent observed that, "in my experience, the 'low man on the pole' was given five different subjects out of seven to accommodate the more senior teachers' time tables. Needless to say I experienced 'burn out' my first year." (102) Another stated that "I was given a packed time table with six different courses to prepare at the junior high level." (183)

Not all found this gruelling load to be too difficult to handle. One commented:

> I was in a remote rural school and loaded down with subjects least appealing to the veterans. It was interesting and demanding. What I lacked in experience I made up for with enthusiasm. Though exhausted, I made it through unscathed. (148)

The need for a supportive environment as a predicator of success was also mentioned. One respondent observed that "the time commitment preparing for lessons and marking was very high. I was given six different courses to prepare in the first semester. It was hard but I learned a great deal. Colleagues were essential in helping me survive." (214)

Some respondents noted that it was not only the teaching tasks that made life difficult:

> The non-teaching tasks were overwhelming in the beginning. There were FORMS for everything! The supervision, additional help time, supervising extra-curricula clubs and teams, parent-teacher interviews, attendance at special events, such as awards, breakfasts, and concerts, were also very overwhelming. University NEVER prepared us for any of this. Many first and second year teachers are stretched to their absolute maximum and the older,

> experienced teacher's response is -- "well, we paid our dues, now it's your turn!" It's a vicious cycle! (162) [Emphases in original]

Continuing on this theme, another respondent felt that "I wasn't prepared for parent-teacher interviews by my university education nor by a system inservice -- this is crucial for new teachers." (183) This sense of having to cope with far more than was anticipated has led to a certain degree of cynicism among teachers. One noted that "I felt overwhelmed until February. We work for less pay so perhaps we should be expected to DO LESS work." (085) [Emphasis in original]

Another observed that:

> Teachers, not just first year teachers, need to establish what they must do from what is expected but not really essential. We traditionally have done so MUCH extra it has become the norm, the expectation, and now we are judged on the EXTRAS more than on the EDUCATIONAL GOALS. (150) [Emphases in original]

The whole discussion was summed up by a respondent who noted that "new teachers should have EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES." (126) [Emphasis in original] The implication that veteran teachers were taking advantage of their younger and less experienced colleagues might be grounded in physiological realities. One respondent, new to a school but not to the profession, noted that "all teachers need extra planning time, not just new ones. When I was younger I had more time and energy to devote to my job." (180) Another expanded on this issue:

> Although I found that I was working between 14 to 15 hours a day, I still find that I spend incredible numbers of hours on school work outside the classroom. It is, however, a lot easier to take as a beginning teacher as one has youth and generally a lot fewer outside responsibilities than when one is older, raising a family, etc. I do not believe that younger teachers should be given more planning time at the expense of more experienced teachers. I do, however, believe that the more experienced teachers should help new teachers more, by providing materials, helping to improve morale, and so on. (120)

Respondents indicated that some of the ways in which the more experienced teachers could assist beginning teachers included better communication strategies. This was especially the case with respect to informing new staff of the relevant policies and procedures of the school. A number of respondents also indicated that it would be helpful to neophytes if the more experienced teachers did not expect the beginning teachers to immediately take on the same work load as a veteran. Many of the new teachers who participated in the study reported that they had entered teaching with the expectation that they would work hard, but that they had often felt overloaded and isolated in their first few months. It would appear that established teachers might be able to take a more active role in easing the entry of new colleagues to the profession.

**Theme 6: Policies and procedures**. It became apparent that there is a need to inform neophyte teachers of the local conditions for teaching. Respondents indicated that there were difficulties which arose due to their not having access to, or knowledge of, school policy and procedures. One commented:

> As a new teacher I was told the new policy book was in the process of being reprinted and there were none available. Eventually I borrowed one. First, it is important to read and ask questions about policies, yet it is hard to find the time to read the whole manual. Each school should have a 'new teachers' handbook for fast reference to rules, procedures, and important dates. This might also outline a set of expectations -- such as disciplining, classroom decorations, etc. (095)

Another also stressed the need for consistency and the role an established policy handbook could play in assisting in the development of such consistency:

> At first I felt very uninformed about school policies and so forth. I feel our teachers share similar values but have different 'rules' and consequences and therefore the standard is not set. Kids are confused and then feel some teachers are 'mean' and others 'easy'. (061)

One respondent observed that the teacher has to take some responsibility for discovering what expectations exist in the school:

> I worked at this school for half a year before I started teaching. I was the guidance person. Therefore I was not shocked when I started to teach. It's really a challenge to be a first year teacher. You are always doing your work for the next day or days ahead. I also phoned around and talked to my old teachers about teaching and to help me in areas of subjects, rules, and dealing with students. (098)

Another emphasized the need for staff collaboration and administrative leadership:

> My school has excellent leadership from the principal. As a staff, we have developed school policies, an organizational basis, and a common philosophy that directly relates, recognizes and responds to the specific needs of the community. We work a great deal with parents and other community members to develop programs that are appropriate for our students. Staff members also share strategies they are continually developing that work with the student needs. (154) [Emphasis in original]

The situation described above would be, according to Steve, "simply heaven." He went on to note that "my school has no leadership, the staff don't talk to each other about anything to do with kids, and we never see the parents. I want to work in their [Respondent 154] school!" Many of the respondents indicated that it was assumed that they would intuitively know what was acceptable student behavior and would know how to deal with those cases where the behavior was not acceptable. However, as was noted by those respondents who were new to a specific school but had previous teaching experience, the policies and procedures established to deal with a particular issue in one school were sometimes quite different from those established to deal with the same issue in another school. It was observed that planned inservice sessions might help alleviate the confusion that many new teachers felt with respect to this issue.

**Theme 7: Issues of ethnocultural diversity**. To a number of respondents, the question of preparing teachers to be knowledgeable about issues of ethnocultural diversity was not considered to be important. There appeared to be an attitude that because "this is not a real issue in my classroom this year," (108) the topic need not be raised. Other respondents observed that they were not teaching in an ethnoculturally diverse situation and so did not feel that they required any knowledge of this area. The

qualitative data suggested that respondents attempt to rationalize their belief that they do not require an ethnocultural focus in their inservice experiences. One commented:

> I'm not in an ethnoculturally diverse classroom. I have one aboriginal student and 83 white, middle class, rural students. This school and division are very supportive and cooperative with regards to working towards meeting my professional needs. (005)

Other respondents focused on academic achievement as the purpose of education, and avoided making any linkage between teacher knowledge of minority learning styles and consequent improvement in student achievement. One observed that "there is a greater concern at my school for meeting academic, social and emotional needs, rather than making the ethnocultural diversity in my classroom, or school, a greater concern." (151) Another commented that:

> My initial teaching experience at this school was excellent and continues to be so. The reason for this is the excellent administration and their 100% support of teachers! The kids are not average -- they are low in ability, have problems at home, etc., etc. Yet it is a good environment to be in. To me the ethnocultural issue is a non-issue. More important to me is support of teachers, teaching parents how to be better parents, more discipline and less liberal views of young 'offenders' who are turning our classrooms into battle zones. This is grossly unfair to the average-good students. Why do we cater to those children who are simply taking up space in the classroom? (055)

There were those respondents who appeared to have a perception that any student from an ethnocultural minority would, by definition, not be academically capable. One noted:

> I do not teach in what I would classify as an ethnoculturally diverse school. There are, perhaps, four ESL students in a school population of 550. I do not teach any of these four students. The most prevalent cultural minority is Jewish. These students do provide information about their culture to teachers

> and other students. However, they are neither linguistically nor socioeconomically diverse from other students. (179)

Another commented that "my school remains, for the most part, culturally homogeneous. Those students from ethnoculturally diverse backgrounds who do attend are primarily involved in the International Baccalaureate program and as such do not fit the classic profile of minority students." (069) No opinion as to what constituted such a classic profile was proffered.

A third suggested that the school teaches academic values which are not acceptable to, or accepted by, non-white-middle-class communities.

> The students I teach now are very different from those I taught in an inner city school previously. I had difficulty in dealing with the different values of students of 'First Nation' culture at that school. As an academic subject teacher I felt that what I had to offer or perhaps the way I offered it was not appreciated. I transferred out of the school. (136)

A similar comment came from a respondent with a different vantage point:

> I am having my best year teaching in my present position. I am in an upper white middle class community where there is tremendous knowledge and support for the teaching staff and school activities. Every student has been given a strong foundation of skills before entering the classroom. Almost every parent has done or will do individual work with students at home before the year is over. (065)

There were some respondents who raised the issue of preparing teachers for ethnocultural diversity. One observed:

> My school is located in a community of varied ethnocultural background. Nearby junior high schools and high schools are having frequent problems with racially initiated fights, confrontations, and isolations. We have <u>none</u> at our school. Students and staff are expected to treat each other with respect. We highlight our differences and sameness. We have teachers on staff who help

> educate other staff when dealing with new immigrant children and cultural differences. I feel very strongly that teachers should be prepared in university and when first hired for the ethnocultural diversity in the schools. I was prepared because I grew up and worked in this area but I've seen quite a few new teachers who are not familiar with the diversity and whose inexperience shows. The kids pick up on their uncomfortableness and will react to it. (162) [Emphasis in original]

Another respondent did not appear convinced that the school alone could help prepare teachers to be properly aware of the difficulties in dealing with parents who did not share the same opinion of teachers as perhaps the teachers do of themselves:

> The school as a whole has done its best to prepare one with knowledge needed. One can not be prepared for the lack of respect towards teachers in the community, lack of respect from students, or lack of respect from support staff such as teacher associates. (037)

Not all respondents saw the role of the school as simply being to maintain the status quo and reward those who shared the views and values of the majority culture. One observed that:

> I don't teach in a particularly ethnoculturally diverse classroom. This doesn't mean that I don't think that I, or any other teacher, shouldn't be prepared for an ethnoculturally diverse situation. Us homogeneous folks are often overlooked when initiatives in this area are undertaken. We applied for funding from the Métis Nation of Saskatchewan, to bring in story tellers, elders, and to purchase First Nations and Aboriginal library resources. Our project was rejected because we didn't have a significant number of First Nations or Aboriginal students. That's one of the reasons we have a need for these things! Our school environment is short on resource people and students with understanding. Also, the Aboriginal students we do serve have a right to see their culture represented and positively reflected in their school. (022)

Such an opinion, however, was rarely stated. The prevailing sense which came from responses related to this theme was that ethnocultural diversity was not considered to be a key issue. Rather, respondents indicated that they believed that it was the responsibility of their students to change to fit the expectations of the school, rather than the other way around. Many of the teachers who participated in this study suggested that what they described as white, middle class values were important predictors of academic success. Therefore, they imply, it is more important for the students to acquire such values than it is for the teacher to consider issues of ethnocultural diversity in their teaching.

**Theme 8: First Nations education**. The issue of First Nations education was specifically addressed by a number of respondents. It became apparent that many were aware of the concerns associated with this topic. One respondent was quite emphatic about this issue, stating that "I feel that teachers need more experiences with reserves and First Nations people, instead of theories." (079) Another contended that more than simple experience was required, and rather that a philosophical position should be taken:

> I am a First Nation teacher (Cree) with First Nation students (Cree) in a band controlled school. Yet I feel I am part of a neo-colonial system. I believe that teachers of other backgrounds from their students should be aware and clear of their own cultural background -- know their values and beliefs and be able to state them otherwise they can do more harm by unconsciously teaching or having their values prevail. They must be aware of when not to overstep. In my present school, we have a lot of bandaids, no clear focus or vision of programming expectations and standards, no discussions of specific community and student wants and expectations. We are a school. There is no statement on what makes us special or unique. (087)

Where First Nations schools do celebrate their uniqueness, however, not all teachers are appreciative of the effort:

> I am a single white female who is employed by the Band. On a daily basis I am reminded that I am not native and therefore I am treated differently, by the students, than are the other teachers. The teachers treat me like this too! The

> native teachers are very racist. They do not appreciate white people trying to teach native students. They seem to think that white people know nothing about their past, culture, or language. I truly know what it feels like to be a minority. In our community, there are not very many white people. I don't consider myself as a racist person. I see the individual as who they are, and what qualities they possess, good or bad, and not just solely on the color of their skin. This was and still is part of my daily struggle as a teacher, for my colleagues to give me a chance to prove myself as a white native instead of native. (137) [Emphasis in original]

For some respondents, it would appear that sometimes the quality of the teaching experience is a result of geographical and linguistic factors:

> All in all, I feel I am lucky to be teaching on a reserve in which English is the first language for the majority of aboriginal people living here. Further up north, teaching middle English curriculum is a lot tougher because these people have English as their second language. I had a rough go of it the first year, teaching in an isolated environment. However, my second year is going a lot better and I enjoy it a lot more because I've developed certain teaching strategies to help meet the individual students' needs in respect to their community surroundings and values. Getting in touch with many community members and going that extra step to become aware of their views has really helped me a lot with what to expect from their children as students and also in adapting my teaching strategies to meet the childrens' individual needs. (091)

For other respondents, the issues of linguistic and social skills are also important:

> Our school staff focuses on positives and rewards positive behaviours. We have a meeting once a week to discuss any problems or to ask other students to 'stroke' a student who needs to feel better about themselves. I encourage First Nations students to share their stories and invite parents to school but not often do they come -- except for a few families who are always willing to come. I find that many of my students have poor English language skills but they do not have any Cree language skills either. I really believe that the biggest

> disadvantage that the First Nations students have with language skills is that no one reads to them in the home -- whether in Cree or English. I have seen that those families who read to their children as preschoolers or in early school years have children that are successful in school. I got the job I have now because I subbed at the school several times and the board offered me a position to fill in for a teacher on leave. She never came back and I stayed. I live in a rural area and do take part in some community activities but I live on the edge of this school district. It is a very large area with students bussed from a long way off. (070)

One means of addressing this problem of linguistic ability was to have teachers who were fluent in the first language of the students and who were willing to use that language in the classroom. Not all were. Tracy noted that the grade 1 teacher in her school "was too shy to use Dene with the kids, because she wasn't sure whether she was speaking it properly herself." John, however, recounted a case where a teacher at his school had made a positive impact on the students:

> We have one teacher who is of Métis ancestry and who sees first language instruction as being important. And it's phenomenal, the difference, you know. I can think of particular kids who have just thrived in his classroom because they recognize that, basically they feel accepted and valued, and it's just amazing the transformation which comes over those kids.

Brian observed that even teachers without first language fluency can still increase their effectiveness by becoming sensitive to differences in student language abilities:

> All our teachers are very aware that they're teaching in a second language situation. And they're all aware that their students are all non-English first language speakers, and they adapt to that in various ways. In the elementary, you know, the teacher identifies different objects in the room, desk, chair, window, wall, like they would in a regular English classroom down south. But they also would have the Dene instructor make up theme words in Dene, so the two words are on that same object.

He goes to note that, as an administrator, he can determine different ways in which teachers strive to be sensitive to the differences in student learning styles:

> Just in conversation and from experience in the classroom, you know that teachers are aware of it in other ways as well. They'll say, you think that student is not doing anything, because he just sits there all day, or all class, and doesn't write and doesn't take notes. But then at test time, or review time, or evaluation time, you know, he knows what's going on. He was able to answer those questions, whether written or not. So they're saying, maybe that student is just more comfortable listening. . . . As a teacher and administrator you have to think, is it that the student is not paying attention and not doing the work or is that student just doing the work in a way that is more comfortable for him? Perhaps, in an unconscious way, he knows that this is the way that he learns.

It was apparent that many non-Aboriginal respondents who worked with First Nations students believed that, to be effective teachers, they needed help in addressing the special concerns arising from the ethnocultural differences between them and their students. A number of respondents observed that inservice programs which sought to teach the teachers about First Nations culture, language, and lifestyle were welcomed by many non-Aboriginal teachers. Others noted that it was particularly important in schools with a low First Nations enrolment for teachers to be made aware of contemporary issues in Aboriginal education, self-government, and so forth.

**Theme 9: Parental responsibility**. As indicated under theme 8, a number of respondents expressed the view that, as outsiders to the specific ethnocultural communities in which they taught, they relied upon the parents to take some of the responsibility for educating the teacher about issues of ethnocultural difference. As one respondent observed, "ethnic parents have a responsibility to the school their children attend to improve teacher awareness and knowledge of their cultural expectations and norms." (150) Another commented that the school administration "could have filled me in on the expectations of various groups of parents AND how to respond to parents' questions in a way that reflects the school's philosophy and serves all parties well." (133) [Emphasis in original] When parents are involved in the school, the results appear to be positive. As noted by one respondent:

> Since my school has three programs, the emphasis on student achievement is very high. However, there is a noticeable difference between student achievement in all three programs. The students in the Ukrainian Bilingual program show a higher desire to learn and do well. Likewise, the parents of these students are very involved in the school and their children's education. The regular program parents are not as involved in their child's education, as a general rule, and therefore the desire to achieve is not as strong. In my two years of teaching, I've noticed that parental support is a key ingredient for student success. (122)

A different respondent, apparently oblivious to the manner in which school calendars tend to reflect a certain religious and ethnocultural bias, suggested that parental input was sufficient to reduce conflict within the school:

> Our school has children from many different backgrounds. We treat everyone equally in all areas. During Hallowe'en, Christmas, Easter seasons those children (agnostic, Jehovah Witness, Muslim, Buddhist) are encouraged to do what they and their parents feel is appropriate (i.e. participate at school only, do something non-religious during other instructions) and their beliefs are discussed along with Christian beliefs during holiday times. We have NO ethnic/race fighting or groups at our school, even though it exists SOME in the community. (107) [Emphases in original]

The administrators interviewed were ambivalent about the role which parents could, or should, play in the school. John observed that:

> I don't think generally teachers find parents as partners. I think there's a lot of rhetoric, but many teachers are insecure or uncomfortable with parents. You know, for good reason. Because generally the parents are here to come down on you. I think schools tend to be a closed system.

Brian made a distinction between the role of the parent and the role of the school:

> It's not a 50-50 relationship yet. As far as the academic goes, the teachers, and I would include myself in that group, would see ourselves as the primary providers of the formal education. In a lot of cases we're talking about parents who have no formal education or very elementary formal education, but I don't think there's a teacher up here that discounts the informal education that the parents and families possess and are capable of passing on to their children, and that is their culture. We realize that we cannot teach the Dene culture, we cannot teach the Dene language, but we know that the parents can and the grandparents can, and it occurs. But as far as the formal education goes, probably the vast majority would feel that the teacher is the primary giver of formal education to those students.

When asked whether the teachers in his school received support from the parents, Brian responded:

> It would probably depend on the day and the parent. You know, there would be some parents who are one hundred per cent supportive of the teachers and think what the teachers do is wonderful, and that also goes for teachers who think the same thing of the parents. But then you would get the opposite extremes as well. I think the parents, right now, are very satisfied that the teachers are responsible for the education. I don't think they're comfortable enough to step in and I think that comes from their lack of formal education. I think parents are a little leery of themselves and a little worried about themselves, and feel insecure about their own education. So they do leave that up to the teachers.

In a situation where parents are not 'insecure about their own education,' John believed that teachers might 'talk the talk' of parental involvement but rarely do they 'walk the walk.' Following a discussion of how some American schools are having success in improving the verbal and written English skills of Hispanic children through a take home reading system (Busco, 1991), John noted that:

> Well, I think teachers would be comfortable with that, as long as they're telling parents what to do. You know, as long as they can tell a parent, go home and

> read with your child and sign this form. And if you don't do that you're a bad parent, that kind of thing. As long as they're telling parents what to do, teachers like that kind of partnership. But they don't like a partnership with parents telling them what to do, that's all. They believe that they know what's best for the kids, and as long as the partnership is one where teachers are in control, it's OK. I call it clobberation, not collaboration!

This cynicism was not always present. Petra commented that:

> We have got some great ideas and support from parents. One problem we had was the high number of young girls getting pregnant, and then having to leave school because they couldn't get a baby sitter. Some parents had heard of a program in New Mexico or somewhere, and thought we should try it. Now we have both the parent and the child in the school. They do parenting classes together, as part of Life Skills, and then get a credit for spending some time as a supervisor of the play school while the others are doing classes. Everybody takes turns. It's been a pain to timetable, but it works well.

Such an experience appears to suggest that the willingness to involve parents in the school can go beyond bake sales and the chaperoning of sports events. Generally, however, the responses associated with this theme indicate that teachers welcome parental involvement only in a limited and, in a sense, controlled manner. There is an underlying concern that some parents might cross the line between assistance and interference, and that as a result the perceived professional autonomy of the teacher may be threatened or compromised. Many of the teachers who participated in this study, while welcoming parental support for their actions, appeared reluctant to facilitate parental involvement in the classroom.

**Theme 10: What was done for me**. Throughout the data collection process, not all comments recounted during the interviews or in the anecdotal comments were of a negative nature. There were many cases where respondents related incidents which had been beneficial to their career. A number of the teachers involved in the study recounted experiences which had made their first year easier to survive. In the majority of cases, the primary reason given was support from administrators and colleagues. Respondents provided a number of examples:

- I received a lot of support. However, we have a small (12) staff and a family atmosphere. New teachers spend a lot of their 'free' time in the school. (107)
- My colleagues were going through the same thing I was. If they had many years of teaching, then they'd experienced it all before. So they were my support system. (006)
- The professional staff is great. (037)
- My initial concerns were how am I going to run this classroom? How do I plan, test, and assess/report each subject area? How do I keep a personal life through all of this? What helped most was staff support. (125)
- What an eye-awakening experience! Without the help, assistance and support of my staff and administration, I would never have made it. (197)

Others made specific mention of activities they recollected as being helpful and supportive. One noted:

> I am fortunate in that I am team teaching with a very patient and knowledgeable teacher in our field, special education. I am learning a lot on how to work with children with behaviour and learning problems. Without the guidance and conferences with my team teacher, I feel I would be very stressed out and frustrated. (079)

Another commented:

> We have a buddy system, and plan throughout the year using 'Team Time,' two periods a week that we come together to share our ideas. Our staff is really supportive of new teachers. We share plans so the adjustment period is made easier. (115)

One respondent observed that prior experiences had made the transition to teaching less stressful:

> My first year of teaching is not typical as I have spent the last eight years as a counsellor in my school division. . . . I also have had training and experience

> in behaviour management which increased my ability to manage classroom behaviour now that I am in a classroom. (022)

The perception of many of the respondents to this theme generally was summed up by one, who stated that "I have found, in the three schools and two provinces where I have taught, that my co-workers were co-operative and willing to share. I have only had positive experiences." (047)

In many of the responses it was possible to identify certain strategies which were considered, in the responses to other themes, to be useful and worthy of implementation. It appeared that a number of schools were taking some steps, through a planned teacher inservice program, to address issues related to ethnocultural diversity. Such examples were not found in all schools.

## Discussion

From the themes which emerged from the qualitative analysis of data related to ethnocultural focus in inservice teacher education, it appeared that many schools did not prepare new teachers for the ethnocultural idiosyncracies of that particular community. This was of concern to many respondents, a number of whom recognized that ethnocultural knowledge can lead to improved pedagogical practice (Dick, Estell, & McCarty, 1995). The initial period of employment, inclusive of recruitment and orientation, was often reported as being rushed and without focus. The stresses of the first year of teaching were reported in detail. These included a perception that some veteran teachers considered neophytes fair game for the most unruly classes, the most difficult timetables, and the most intensive extra-curricula schedule. One strategy was suggested whereby the pressures of the first year might be alleviated. This was that an internship year be made available to beginning teachers, with reduced teaching responsibilities and support from teacher educators being available during that time.

To many of the respondents the crises facing beginning teachers were considered to be so overwhelming that it was difficult to accept a need for inservice programs to focus on issues of ethnocultural diversity. To others it appeared evident that schools were becoming more ethnoculturally heterogeneous and that an understanding of this diversity would help alleviate some of the other problems. The majority of the respondents expressed views on the continuum between the two extremes.

In their anecdotal and interview comments many of the respondents noted the stresses associated with teaching, and described how a rushed and unsupportive

recruitment process often led to a 'sink or swim' mentality which exacerbated the problems experienced by beginning teachers. In many cases the need for a supportive environment for new teachers was stressed, and it was observed that parents, students, and colleagues all contributed to the development of such an environment.

In addition to relating the positive and negative experiences of their early days as teachers, respondents were also able to make specific recommendations. These ideas were concerned with ways in which the beginning teacher experience could be made more effective for other newcomers to the profession. Drawing upon their own experiences, many respondents suggested a number of specific actions and activities. It was their perception that these activities, if implemented, would help relieve the stresses of the first year of teaching. The suggestions made were analyzed, grouped together in six related clusters, and are presented in chapter VIII.

## Conclusions

In this chapter, data have been presented which relate to the existence, or otherwise, of an ethnocultural focus in the initial inservice experiences of respondents. A variety of both quantitative and qualitative data were analyzed and presented.

From the analyses of the quantitative data, it appeared that respondents believed an ethnocultural focus should be part of inservice teacher education programs generally but had been lacking in their own program. Almost half the respondents, 42.8%, indicated that there was a need for teachers with a specialized knowledge of ethnocultural diversity at the school in which they worked. Of the ten themes which emerged from the analysis of qualitative data, eight supported that finding. In the other two themes, "a positive first year" and "what was done for me," respondents suggested that a planned, careful, and less threatening entry into the profession was both possible and desirable.

A number of the respondents provided suggestions which they believed would, if implemented, improve the initial inservice experiences of new teachers. These suggestions and comments are presented and discussed elsewhere in this study.

# CHAPTER VIII

# SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The purposes of this chapter are fourfold. They are (1) to provide an overview of the study; (2) to present a summary of the findings; (3) to discuss the theoretical, practical, and research implications of the study; and (4) to present a concluding statement for the study.

## Overview

The primary purpose of the study was to explore the extent to which teachers are being prepared to be effective educators for the variety of student ethnocultural populations found in contemporary Western Canadian schools and, if appropriate, to suggest ways in which that preparation might be further facilitated and enhanced.

### Conceptual Framework

A review of the literature related to the preparation of teachers for ethnocultural diversity identified two independent variables, these being teacher education and teacher experience. Each variable was found to consist of two subsets. The four subsets were found to consist of two, three, four, and three components or dimensions respectively. The conceptual framework did not include dimensions which more deeply explored issues of socioeconomic class, values, or religious influence, other than under the general rubric of the ethnoculturalism.

The two subsets for the teacher education variable are ethnocultural knowledge and the preservice program. The three components of ethnocultural knowledge are the cultural dimension, the pedagogical dimension, and the sociolinguistic dimension. The two components of the preservice program are courses of study and the practica.

Ethnocultural knowledge is that body of knowledge, skills, and strategies which permits one to be an effective teacher of ethnoculturally diverse and ethnoculturally different students. In this study I have identified the three dimensions of ethnocultural knowledge which are found in most preservice teacher education programs, albeit to varying degrees.

The cultural dimension is concerned with the provision of courses which are ethnic in name, content, and perspective. Such courses provide teachers with an understanding of ethnocultural difference (Erickson, 1993). They allow beginning

teachers to develop an appreciation of cultural pluralism (Washburn, 1981) and to recognize the weaknesses inherent in the prevailing cultural deficit models of minority student achievement (Jacob & Jordan, 1993). They should also allow neophytes to develop the understanding that children from different ethnocultural populations have differing abilities to cross cultural and language boundaries. One reason for this is that "ethnocultural populations differ in their cultural frames of reference; some of the latter are oppositional to that of the mainstream. The cultural / language frames of reference of some other ethnocultural groups are merely different but not oppositional" (John Ogbu, personal communication, March 1996). This understanding then informs teaching practice with respect to the pedagogical dimension.

The pedagogical dimension encourages preservice teachers to recognize the ethnocultural idiosyncracies of student learning. Through an understanding of verbal and non-verbal communication cues (Sikkema & Niyekawa, 1987) teachers can better understand the true meanings of student responses. In developing an awareness of the "language and dialect repertoires" of students (Corson, 1991), teachers are better able to plan and deliver lessons which are understood by their students.

The sociolinguistic dimension provides beginning teachers with an understanding of ethnoculturally preferred styles of discourse. Such understandings might lead to an increased comprehension of ESL learning patterns (e.g., Burnaby, 1980; Stairs, 1988; Vogt, Jordan, & Tharp, 1993), the reduction of conflict (Eslamirasekh, 1992), and the adoption of ethnoculturally specific teaching strategies (e.g., Barnhardt, 1982; Irvine & York, 1995; Leith & Slentz, 1989).

An understanding of these dimensions of ethnocultural knowledge will not, in and of itself, provide beginning teachers with more than a passive understanding of ethnocultural difference. The development of an active acceptance, respect, and tolerance for ethnoculturally different behaviors, learning styles, and patterns of language usage (Sikkema & Niyekawa, 1987) is an appropriate and necessary function of a preservice teacher education program. In this research the two component parts of such a program have been identified as the courses of study and the practicum experience.

The courses of study are those formal learning experiences provided to student teachers. These courses are constructed and scheduled so as to provide a sequenced program which addresses that material considered, by the particular institution, to be required knowledge. In grounding all such courses within a perspective of

ethnocultural awareness, teacher educators can facilitate the acquisition of ethnocultural knowledge by student teachers (e.g., Ladson-Billings, 1995; Noley, 1991; Smolkin, Suina, & Mercado, 1995). Such knowledge is still passive, however, and must be applied if it is to become an internalized and active practice.

The practicum experience is the means by which student teachers can learn how to apply ethnocultural knowledge in the classroom. The practicum can provide a vehicle for neophyte teachers to apply, in a supportive and safe environment, those strategies they were introduced to through their courses of study (e.g., LaCelle-Peterson & VanFossen, 1995; Mahan, 1977). The practicum supervisor has a responsibility to provide the appropriate encouragement and support for the student teacher. Failure to do this might result in what Covert (1986), Wideen, Mayer-Smith, and Moon (1993), and others, have documented as the failure of the practicum to facilitate student learning.

The two subsets for the teacher experience variable are recruitment and initiation. The three components of recruitment are advertisements, interviews, and the screening and selection of candidates. The four components of initiation are orientation, induction, mentoring, and inservice sessions and workshops.

The initial experiences of a beginning teacher encompass the transition from student teacher to novice teacher. In this study these experiences have been separated into two temporal stages.

The first stage extends from the initial consideration of a potential position until the moment of hire. Through the tracking of teacher recruitment patterns (e.g., Carnegie, Goddard, & Heidt, 1992; Mahan, 1977) it is possible for employers to target certain preservice teacher education programs in their advertising strategies. Trained community members (Hillabrandt, Romano, Stang, & Charleston, 1991) and ethnoculturally sensitive administrators (U.S. Department of Education, 1990) can then screen the candidates and select those whose ethnocultural knowledge is appropriate for that school.

The second stage of transition experienced by beginning teachers extends from the time of hire through the early years of teaching. In this study the second stage has been identified as the initiation period. The four components of this period were identified as orientation, induction, mentoring, and inservice. In the literature, these terms are often used interchangeably. In this study, however, distinctions were made to separate the nuances of each stage.

The initial introductory period was labelled as the orientation. In this period the new teacher is introduced to the ethnocultural diversity present in the school and the community. This introduction might occur through an examination of case studies (Carey & Kleinfeld, 1988), structured activities in the school (Corson, 1991; Ramsey, 1987), or participatory activities in the community (Goddard, 1992; Reyhner, 1981).

A continued process of socialization follows the orientation period. In the study this process is referred to as induction. It provides an opportunity for teachers to further discuss and clarify those issues raised during the orientation. The induction process should be "systematically planned and implemented" (Cooke & Pang, 1991, p. 94) with visible and committed participation by the principal (e.g., Chester, 1991, 1992; Cole, 1990; Hale, 1992; McNay & Cole, 1989).

The induction process is one means by which teachers might be educated about the ethnocultural diversity and preferred learning styles of the particular community served by the school (e.g., Cazden & Mahan, 1989; Kleinfeld, McDiarmid, Grubis, & Parrett, 1983; Szasz, 1991). As such, induction provides an opportunity to connect the teachers' experiences with the community and achieve Spindler's (1987) notion of sociocultural contextualization.

The remaining two components of the initiation period continue throughout the early years of the career of a beginning teacher. The first is the process of mentoring, where a more experienced teacher provides advice and support to the neophyte (Hale, 1992; Van Thielen, 1992). As new teachers begin to recognize their areas of knowledge and expertise, and their concomitant areas of weakness and uncertainty, so a planned process of continuing inservice might be implemented. Inservice programs serve to enhance the professional development of teachers generally (Blackburn & Moisan, 1987; Casey, 1992; Lawton, 1987). Such programs might also be structured so as to facilitate the continued preparation of teachers for ethnocultural diversity.

These twelve dimensions of teacher education and teacher experience were used to develop the conceptual framework for the study. Each dimension was investigated through the collection and analysis of quantitative and qualitative data. The relatively low return rate of responses for this study, 50.6%, limits the extent to which conclusions may be drawn. However, the data collected during the study appear to support the findings from the literature that these dimensions do have an impact on the effectiveness of the beginning teacher, specifically in minimizing the problems experienced by neophyte teachers during their first years in the profession.

**Respondents**

The respondents in the study were 228 educators from a variety of schools in Western Canada, specifically the provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan. Of these, 113 were from schools located in a large urban centre in Alberta; 56 were from schools in a rural school division in Saskatchewan or a county in Alberta; and 58 were from schools in seven First Nations jurisdictions across the two provinces.

**Research Methodology**

A two-stage research design was implemented. In the first stage a variety of fixed response and open-ended questionnaire data were collected. In the second stage some qualitative interview data were collected.

The survey instrument was developed, subjected to peer review, revised, pilot tested, and revised again prior to the study being conducted. The survey questions were based on an extensive review of the literature and on the research questions which guided the study.

The reliability of items on the questionnaire was found to be reasonably high. Using Cronbach's Alpha, the reliability for the "actual experiences" scale was 0.69 and for the "preferred experiences" scale was 0.81. Cronbach's Alpha estimates test reliability from a single test administration rather than from a test/re-test procedure.

The descriptive and exploratory nature of the study was reflected by the data analysis techniques employed. Descriptive statistics such as means, standard deviations, and frequencies were employed in the analysis of quantitative questionnaire data. Factor analysis was used to reduce the questionnaire items to 12 scales: six scales were related to the actual experiences of respondents in their preservice and inservice teacher education programs and six others were related to the preferred experiences of respondents in these areas. This was supplemented with the use of inferential statistical techniques such as correlational analysis, analysis of variance, and multiple linear regression. An *ex-post facto* analysis of qualitative questionnaire and interview data was employed. The interviews were transcribed and 17 themes emerged from the qualitative data. Six of these themes arose from the discussion of an ethnocultural focus in preservice teacher education; the other eleven themes became evident in the discussion of the initial inservice experiences of respondents.

Through these analyses the researcher was then better able to gain a more fully grounded understanding of (1) the ethnocultural focus which respondents perceived themselves to have received as part of their preservice teacher education program, (2)

the preferences of respondents for an ethnocultural focus to be provided in preservice teacher education programs, and (3) the perceptions and preferences of respondents with respect to their initial inservice experiences.

## Summary of Findings

The primary purpose of the study was largely achieved through research directed at an examination of the general problem outlined above and five research questions. The conceptual framework of the study, the general problem statement, and the specific research questions which effectively guided the study, were all derived from the review of related literature.

Each research question is listed below, together with a summary of the major findings related to that question. Following the discussion of the research questions, the general problem statement is restated and addressed in the conclusions section of the chapter.

### Ethnocultural Diversity in the Schools

The first research question explored the extent to which ethnocultural diversity existed in the schools which were included in the study. It was apparent that the majority of schools included in the study displayed high levels of ethnocultural diversity. Some three quarters of the respondents, 74.8%, reported that they taught in classrooms where two or more home languages were spoken by the students. Approximately 43% of respondents described the students they taught as being ethnoculturally heterogeneous, and 37% observed that they were ethnoculturally different from the majority of their students.

The respondents described themselves in a manner compatible to the findings of other studies. Some 70% of the respondents were female, 70% were 30 years of age or older, and 59% were monolingual. The profile which developed was one of monolingual females, generally 30 years of age or older, who were teaching ethnoculturally diverse bilingual or multilingual students. This profile roughly corresponds to findings by other researchers in the field (e.g., Banks, 1991; Grant & Secada, 1990; Lockhart, 1991).

### Problems Experienced by Beginning Teachers

The second research question was concerned with determining whether the problems experienced by beginning teachers in ethnoculturally diverse classrooms differed from those experienced by beginning teachers generally. The results suggested that beginning teachers all experience the same problems. There were no statistically

significant differences found between the problems experienced by beginning teachers employed in ethnoculturally diverse classrooms and the problems experienced by beginning teachers generally. Therefore, the findings reported here do not focus specifically on ethnoculturally related problems. Rather, they are problems reported to be experienced by beginning teachers generally, including those in ethnoculturally diverse classrooms or teaching students who are ethnoculturally different from themselves.

The findings of the study did suggest that fewer problems were experienced by beginning teachers who perceived an ethnocultural focus in their preservice teacher education program than by those who claimed they had not had such a focus. This finding was particularly the case for respondents who had only one or two years of experience as teachers, suggesting that an ethnocultural focus in preservice teacher education might provide beginning teachers with a 'knowledge cushion' or 'security blanket' during their early experiences in the classroom. One group, teachers employed in rural schools, expressed the opinion that an ethnocultural focus in preservice teacher education would possibly have alleviated many of the problems they experienced as beginning teachers. Such a perception was not reported by respondents from either the urban or isolated milieux.

A statistically significant relationship was found to exist between the problems experienced by beginning teachers generally and the level of supportive opportunities and supplies they received. The majority of those teachers who were provided with additional planning time, inservice workshops which focused on the challenges of being a new teacher, supplementary resources to establish their classrooms, and the opportunity for collegial collaboration with other teachers, experienced fewer problems than did those who did not report receiving such support. Further, the study findings indicated that those respondents who reported receiving supportive opportunities and supplies contended that they were better able to meet the individual needs of ethnoculturally diverse student populations. The data suggested that those school administrators who were supportive of their neophyte teachers helped to provide an environment conducive to the success of those teachers.

**Ethnocultural Focus in Preservice Teacher Education Programs**

The third research question addressed the extent to which beginning teachers perceived an ethnocultural focus in their preservice teacher education programs. The data suggested that fewer than one third, 32.1%, of respondents perceived such a

focus. The data indicated that those respondents who had between one and four years of experience were more likely to report developing an awareness of the cultural, pedagogical, and sociolinguistic dimensions of ethnocultural knowledge in their preservice teacher education program. This finding suggested that universities were becoming more aware of ethnocultural issues or, alternatively, that recent graduates were more likely to remember the details associated with this aspect of their teacher education program.

The data also indicated a statistically significant relationship between teachers who reported receiving an ethnocultural focus in their preservice teacher education program and respondents employed in isolated and Band operated schools. Further, a statistically significant relationship was determined to exist between respondents who indicated that they were bilingual or multilingual and those who received an ethnocultural focus in their preservice teacher education program. These findings of the study suggest at least three possible explanations. First, it may be that those teachers who develop a higher level of awareness vis-a-vis the teaching of ethnoculturally diverse students appear to be those more willing to accept employment in schools which serve predominantly minority populations. Second, the study findings may also indicate that beginning teachers who have second language fluency are more likely to recognize the dimensions of ethnocultural knowledge which are present in their preservice education program. Third, it is possible that those students who are bilingual themselves, and who are subsequently willing to work in schools serving ethnoculturally diverse and ethnoculturally different populations, may be more likely to enroll in optional courses at university that focus on ethnocultural issues, teaching strategies, and so forth.

The data suggested that the majority of respondents, 77%, felt that little or no attention had been given, in their preservice teacher education program, to the educational implications of ethnocultural differences among students. The responses to the open-ended items on the questionnaire suggested that many beginning teachers were of the opinion that such attention would have been useful and advantageous to them at the start of their careers. This contention was particularly evident among respondents from small schools, from respondents in schools which they considered to be more effective, and from those who reported between one and four years of experience as a teacher.

**Ethnocultural Focus in Initial Inservice Experiences**

The fourth research question explored the extent to which beginning teachers perceived an ethnocultural focus in their initial inservice experiences. The low rate of return, exacerbated by the fact that only two items on the questionnaire specifically addressed this issue, means that caution must be exercised in interpreting these data.

The data indicated that almost half the respondents, 42.9%, described the students they taught as being ethnoculturally heterogeneous. Additionally, slightly more than one third (37.2%) of the teachers observed that they were ethnoculturally different from the majority of their students. The interview data suggested that very few respondents perceived an ethnocultural focus in either the recruitment or initiation phases of their career. The quantitative data also indicated that fewer than one third of respondents, 28.1%, actually received a planned period of orientation after they were hired and prior to starting teaching.

Of those who did receive a planned orientation, 90% reported that they had not been given the opportunity to discuss case studies which explored ethnocultural issues. Further, only 38.3% reported that they had received the opportunity to review teaching methods which were considered, by experienced teachers, to be most compatible with the distinct learning styles of the children in the school. Again, as this group constitutes only 3.5% of the total respondents, caution must be taken in interpreting or extrapolating these data.

**Preparing Teachers for Ethnocultural Diversity**

The fifth research question addressed the identification of practices which if implemented might, in the opinion of the respondents, lead to an improvement in teaching ethnoculturally diverse student populations. These practices were identified from a review of the responses to the survey questionnaires and to the interviews. The suggestions are presented in two parts, the first dealing with suggestions for those involved in preservice teacher education programs and the second with suggestions for school and system administrators.

**Preservice Teacher Education**. Among suggestions made by respondents were recommendations to assist universities involved in the preservice preparation of teachers facilitate an improvement in the preparation of teachers for teaching ethnoculturally diverse students. These recommendations were drawn from responses to both the questionnaire and the subsequent interviews. Four recommendations were identified from the analysis of the quantitative data:

1. That there should be an overall ethnocultural focus permeating all aspects of preservice teacher education. In all, 50.4% of respondents agreed and 34.5% strongly agreed that it is appropriate that student teachers receive a specialized knowledge of ethnocultural diversity through their preservice education programs.
2. That courses and practica in preservice teacher education programs should recognize the ethnocultural diversity of Canada generally and should not be restricted to First Nations issues and experiences. Overall, 41.1% of respondents indicated that they agreed, and 26.3% strongly agreed, that preservice teacher education courses which attempt to provide students with information on First Nations history, culture, or philosophy should be compulsory for all teachers. In written comments, however, some 10% of respondents indicated that in their opinion any ethnocultural focus in preservice teacher education should not be restricted to First Nations issues but should reflect the broader ethnocultural diversity of Canada.
3. That preservice courses should give teachers a comprehensive understanding of ethnoculturally diverse learning styles. Some 47% of respondents agreed, and 28% strongly agreed, with this item.
4. That teacher education courses should provide teachers with the skills and strategies that are required to adapt teaching styles to the various individual learning needs of ethnoculturally diverse students. Fewer than one fifth of respondents, 19.3%, indicated that the courses in their preservice teacher education program had provided an understanding of ethnoculturally appropriate teaching styles. Conversely, 44.6% of respondents agreed, and 31.7% strongly agreed, that in their opinion such knowledge and understanding should be part of preservice teacher education.

A further six recommendations were identified from responses to the open-ended items on the questionnaire. Although these individual recommendations were made by a small percentage of respondents, they were supported by qualitative data collected through the interviews. These six recommendations are as follows:

5. That preservice courses should enable teachers to gain a comprehensive understanding of the differences in sociolinguistic development patterns among ethnoculturally diverse groups.
6. That teachers should be encouraged to attain fluency in a second or third language, either prior to entering a preservice teacher education program or as a compulsory component of that program.

7. That preservice courses should recognize teacher mobility and increase teacher knowledge of the structure, administration, and delivery of education in other provinces or jurisdictions.
8. That teacher education programs should include opportunities for seminars where practicing teachers might have the opportunity to discuss their daily work lives with student teachers.
9. That practicum experiences should be organized so that teachers experience a variety of ethnocultural milieux.
10. That practicum experiences should be extended so as to encompass a higher proportion of the preservice teacher education program.
11. That an internship component should be introduced, so that teachers in their first year of teaching might have limited classroom time and continuing access to the university.

**Initial Inservice Experiences**. Respondents also suggested a number of recommendations to assist school systems serving ethnoculturally diverse student populations facilitate improvement in teaching those students. These recommendations, which are drawn from general responses concerned with the orientation period, were again made by that relatively small proportion of respondents who provided anecdotal comments on the questionnaire. The recommendations were that school and system administrators:

1. Actively recruit new teachers from preservice teacher education programs which have an ethnocultural focus.
2. Organize and implement a planned period of orientation to the school and community.
3. Develop and slowly implement an ethnocultural focus in the initiation phase of initial inservice experiences.
4. Provide supportive opportunities and supplies to new teachers, so that they might have a less stressful introduction to the profession.
5. Encourage a planned process of professional growth and development.
6. Assign mentors to new staff, with mutual planning time built in to their timetables.
7. Offer new teachers the opportunity to share the latest pedagogical knowledge at staff meetings.
8. Offer experienced teachers the opportunity to share their successful pedagogical practices by providing new teachers with time to observe other teachers.

9. Understand that developing a 'community school' atmosphere is difficult when the majority of teachers do not live in the same community as most of the students they teach.
10. Participate in an internship component, if introduced, by providing teachers in their first year of teaching with limited classroom time and continued access to the university.

## Implications

The findings of the study have theoretical, practical, and research implications for new teachers, school administrators, and teacher educators. These relate to (1) the actual ethnocultural diversity of the student population; (2) the ethnocultural focus of preservice teacher education programs; and (3) the provision of supportive inservice experiences to new teachers employed in ethnoculturally diverse classroom settings or working with students who are ethnoculturally different from themselves. There have been few attempts to provide empirical data related to these areas from within a Canadian context. The study examined the preparation of teachers for ethnocultural diversity, broadly defined, and did so from within the sociocultural context of contemporary Western Canadian schools.

### Theoretical Implications

Conceptually, an ethnocultural framework was used for the study. Such a framework expands the definitions of cultural difference beyond a mere identification of race, incorporating the multicultural (Banks, 1995; Ladson-Billings, 1995) dimensions of religion, gender, residence, socioeconomic status, language, behaviour, thought patterns, learning styles, and so forth, into the concept of ethnocultural diversity. The preparation of teachers to be effective with an ethnoculturally diverse population includes both the formal and non-formal components of teacher education. As such, it deals with the transitional period during which a teacher leaves student life and enters the profession.

In considering Avery and Walker's (1993) comment that "there is little evidence that the predominantly white teaching force is prepared at either the preservice or inservice level to meet the needs of today's students" (p. 27), the researcher hypothesized that ethnoculturally sensitive teacher education programs would result, when combined with initial teaching experiences where known methods of teaching ethnoculturally diverse students were stressed, in a cadre of teachers who perceived themselves properly prepared to be effective teachers of ethnoculturally diverse students.

The need for teacher education programs to prepare preservice teachers for the realities of ethnoculturally diverse classrooms, with the associated diversity of student learning styles, has been thoroughly described in the literature (e.g., U.S. Department of Education, 1990; Hall, 1993; Roth, 1992). The findings of this study appear to offer some support to this literature. Although the notion that orientation and induction programs should provide the opportunity for beginning teachers to discover the ethnocultural idiosyncrasies of the community in which they are working has received support from a number of recent studies (e.g., Draper, Fraser, & Taylor, 1992; McCarty & Zepeda, 1992; Reynolds, 1992), the data from this study appear to suggest that such a focus should be concentrated during the initiation phase of beginning teacher experience. Further, the findings seem to indicate that teachers who receive a heavy ethnocultural focus in their initial inservice experiences, without having had such a focus in their preservice teacher education programs, might experience more problems than would have been the case if their recruitment and initiation phases did not have an ethnocultural focus.

As noted earlier, there are several other factors which may contribute to the self-reported effectiveness of beginning teachers. These factors should be included in any further theoretical development and research. As described, from the review of literature it appeared that there is little consistency among ethnocultural researchers with respect to the terminology they use. Further research to explore the nuances of definition with respect to the terms intercultural, cross-cultural, and multicultural, for example, would appear to be necessary and would have implications for a number of theoretical models.

**Practical Implications**

This research study contributes to our knowledge of that aspect of the teaching continuum first queried by Sarason, Davidson, and Blatt (1986), namely the relationship which exists between the preparation of teachers and the realities they experience when they embark on their careers. It is apparent that the respondents to the study, as foretold by Cazden and Mahan (1989), do "not share [the same] cultural and social experiences" (p. 54) as the majority of their students. As such, there is a need to address the educational needs of minority groups by sensitizing prospective teachers to issues of ethnocultural diversity through the teacher education process (Wheeler & Boak, 1993). However, in support of Dianda's (1991) findings in a California study, many beginning teachers did not consider the ethnocultural preparation they received

during their preservice programs to be effective in the 'real world' of the classroom. The findings of the study have potential implications for the structure of teacher education programs. These findings led to the identification of recommendations with respect to the recruitment and initiation phases of the initial inservice experiences of beginning teachers.

The study has practical significance in that the question of what might be done to improve the quality of education by enhancing the quality of teachers and teacher education programs is one of great importance. To improve the teacher preparation program is viewed by many as one means of improving the practices of teachers in the classroom.

As far as more experienced teachers are concerned, such exposure to more effective practice may also have a salutary effect. Respondents noted that new teachers often bring with them new ideas and strategies. If schools are able to provide the opportunities for teachers to observe each other in the classroom, if ways are found to focus on pedagogical issues, particularly those associated with ethnoculturally diverse students, then perhaps the novice and the more experienced teacher can have the opportunity to share and learn from each other.

The study identified a number of practices which could be immediately undertaken by those involved in preservice teacher education programs, in the administration of schools, and in teachers' first years in the profession. These recommendations arose from the study and were grounded in the literature. This study had practical implications in that the findings described many of the strategies which have been elsewhere considered to be 'best practice', and then suggested ways in which the recommendations could be implemented.

In order to minimize the problems experienced by beginning teachers, it is suggested that schools which serve ethnoculturally diverse student populations should strive to recruit new teachers from those preservice teacher education programs which have an ethnocultural focus. It is recommended that, prior to the beginning of each school year, all members of staff should be provided with a planned and comprehensive orientation period which addresses issues specific to the school and the community. School administrators should then consider providing their neophyte teachers with a planned initiation phase that has a sharp ethnocultural focus. It is suggested that these steps, taken singly or in tandem, will possibly assist in improving the skills and abilities of

neophyte teachers in their delivery of educational experiences to ethnoculturally diverse students.

**Implications for Research**

The study also makes a contribution to the knowledge base by determining that few, if any, of those strategies that have been reported in the literature as proving effective with ethnoculturally varied student populations were actually part of the preparation or practice of teachers in Western Canadian schools. A majority of respondents reported that they had not developed an awareness of teaching strategies which were considered effective with ethnoculturally diverse or ethnoculturally different student populations. Further, a majority noted that they had received no orientation to their school or community. These responses suggest that further research which focusses on the preparation of teachers for ethnocultural diversity is in order.

A number of teacher education programs, particularly in the north, were designed so as to reflect issues of ethnocultural diversity and ethnocultural difference. The development of such programs, and the values inherent in them, are potential topics for study. The current study did not specifically analyze responses from graduates of such programs. This would be a worthwhile area of further research.

The findings of the study indicate that further revision to, and employment of, the survey questionnaire is warranted. Such revision would possibly include the addition of more items which specifically examine the existence of an ethnocultural focus in the initial inservice experiences of teachers. Further, it may be useful to include more interviews with both beginning and experienced teachers, and with students, in ethnoculturally diverse schools. A replication of this study, limited for example to First Nations schools, might provide further understanding of issues facing beginning teachers in that milieu.

One contribution of this study to the research was through the provision of an indication of the actual ethnocultural diversity to be found among the student population in Canada. Although a number of studies (e.g., Banks, 1991; Grossman, 1991; Leake, 1993; Roth, 1992) have discussed ethnocultural heterogeneity in American schools, there have been few attempts to gather Canadian data. This study contributed to the research base by providing some indication of the levels of ethnocultural diversity in schools in three types of Western Canadian school jurisdictions and in confirming that these levels are similar to those described in American studies.

## Conclusion

The general research problem addressed in this study was as follows:

> To what extent do teachers who have completed preservice and inservice teacher education programs with an ethnocultural emphasis perform more effectively with ethnoculturally diverse and ethnoculturally different students in their classrooms than do teachers who had no similar emphasis in their preparatory programs?

This general problem was addressed through analyses of quantitative and qualitative data collected in the course of the study. Based on the results of this study, it appears that an ethnocultural focus in both preservice programs and inservice experiences contributes to the self-reported effectiveness of teachers of ethnoculturally diverse and ethnoculturally different students.

The results of the study indicate that new teachers who reported receiving ethnocultural emphasis in their preservice teacher education programs would not necessarily perform more effectively with ethnoculturally diverse and ethnoculturally different students in their classrooms unless they had also experienced what they perceived to be an ethnocultural focus in the initiation phase of their initial inservice experiences. The initiation phase referred to here, as previously described, incorporated activities related to the induction of new teachers, the provision of inservice activities focused on the needs of new teachers, and the development of a mentoring program. The findings of the study suggest that many of the respondents are of the opinion that these activities should have an ethnocultural focus and should constitute an integral part of the professional development strategies of a school or school system.

The study results suggest that, when context was not taken into account, no substantive difference in the number or type of problems experienced as a beginning teacher was found to be based solely on the presence of an ethnocultural focus in preservice teacher education. However, with increases in teacher mobility, universities have no way of predicting the schools in which their graduates will be employed initially or later in their careers. The study findings indicate that an ethnocultural focus in preservice teacher education would not be related to an increase in the problems faced

by beginning teachers and, under certain circumstances, might be related to a decrease in the number and type of problems experienced by beginning teachers.

## Reflections

The study provided me with the opportunity to explore the role of ethnocultural diversity and difference in the education of minority students. In view of the paucity of data on this subject from a Canadian perspective, I chose to use a two-stage research design. The first stage involved the development and administration of a research survey questionnaire. This provided me with the 'bare bones' data for the study. To flesh out the skeleton, and to provide a greater depth of comprehension, the second stage of the research involved interviews with a number of informants. The narrative data obtained through the interviews provided me with a richer understanding of the ethnocultural diversity which exists in contemporary schools and of the subsequent issues which face beginning teachers.

I believe that the two-stage design was appropriate for this study and would, if replicating the research, use the same design. Where one wishes to obtain preliminary data from a great number of people in geographically diverse settings then it is undoubtable that a mailed survey questionnaire is the most economical means of collecting those data. One must recognize, however, the limitations inherent in this approach. If feasible, in future I would attempt to personally deliver and collect the questionnaires from the schools. In addition to providing the researcher with the opportunity to establish personal contact and to answer questions which might arise, this strategy would also provide contextualization for the responses. The researcher would have a better sense of the environment in which the respondents were working.

In extending the study beyond this research, however, I would suggest a greater reliance on qualitative methodologies. Through interviews, participant observation and other strategies it would be possible to develop an even deeper understanding of these issues. I would also focus the research within one sociogeographic milieu, as it appears that the relationships between teachers and students are dissimilar in different settings.

The primary purpose of the study was to explore the extent to which teachers are being prepared to be effective educators for the variety of student ethnocultural populations found in contemporary Western Canadian schools and, if appropriate, to suggest ways in which that preparation might be further facilitated and enhanced. To a certain extent this purpose has been achieved.

The study has addressed an issue described by Ducharme and Ducharme (1993), who noted that:

> Teacher education in the 1990s and beyond faces enormous challenges. . . . [The problems and issues include the] lack of racial and ethnic diversity among ourselves and in teacher education candidates compared with the tremendous diversity of the students they will teach in the coming decades. (p.2)

The study has suggested ways in which the ethnocultural diversity of the student population in Western Canada might be addressed. Education and schooling are activities which occur within a specific community context. This context is determined by the sociocultural, sociopolitical, socioeconomic and socioethnic influences of the community, influences which have been described here as being part of an ethnocultural reality. Spindler (1987) has described this as a search for the "sociocultural contextualization of the educative process" (p. 70), a search which was pursued throughout this study.

In suggesting that beginning teachers acknowledge that ethnocultural factors also contribute to minority student success in school it is not intended or implied that ethnocultural difference is the only explanation for marginalization. In the past there has perhaps been a tendency to view the boundaries of poverty and class as the primary causal factors of socioeconomic marginalization. These factors must be included when considering the impact of ethnocultural diversity and difference on educational success.

The study concluded with the observation that knowledge of 'best practice' in the teaching of ethnoculturally diverse populations was available in the literature. Such practices, however, appear to be rarely implemented. While not working directly with students, those involved in the preservice preparation of teachers and those who administer schools still have the opportunity to facilitate improvement in the education of those students. They can do this by improving the preparation of teachers to work with ethnoculturally diverse and ethnoculturally different students. In implementing the suggestions emanating from this research, together with other 'best practices' related in the literature, educators can help to improve the educational experience and academic success of those who are not drawn from the ethnocultural majority in Canada.

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# APPENDICES

# Appendix 1: The Teacher Education, Experience, and Cultural Effectiveness Scale

# The Teacher Education, Experience, and Cultural Effectiveness Scale

A Survey

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© October 1994

## The Teacher Education, Experience, and Cultural Effectiveness Scale

**Part A : Demographic Details** : Please **check** ( √ ) the appropriate answer.

SCHOOL DATA

1. Which of these terms best describes the location of your school?
   1. Urban 127
   2. Rural 58
   3. Isolated 42

2. In which type of school system is your school located?
   1. Public school district 113
   2. County 37
   3. School division 19
   4. Band-operated 58

3. What grades are offered at your school?
   1. K/1 to 6 84
   2. K/1 to 9 14
   3. K/1 to 10 4
   4. K/1 to 12 22
   5. 7 to 9 31
   6. 7 to 12 9
   7. 10 to 12 21
   8. Other 42 (Please specify : )

4. How many students are enrolled at your school?
   1. Fewer than 150 20
   2. 151 to 300 70
   3. 301 to 450 74
   4. 451 to 600 33
   5. 601 to 750 9
   6. More than 751 20

5. What languages are spoken by the students whom you teach? (Please list)
   1. 57
   2. 85
   3. 22
   4. 28
   5. 12
   6. 9
   7. Ø
   8. 6
   9. (or more) 7

6. Would you describe the students whom you teach as being ethnoculturally homogeneous (i.e. from a similar cultural and ethnic background) or ethnoculturally heterogeneous (i.e. they come from a variety of cultural and ethnic backgrounds)?
   1. culturally homogeneous 128
   2. culturally heterogeneous 96

PERSONAL DATA

7. Please indicate whether you are :

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1. | Female | 158 |
| 2. | Male | 69 |

8. What was your age on January 1, 1994?

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1. | Under 29 | 66 |
| 2. | 30 to 39 | 84 |
| 3. | 40 to 49 | 59 |
| 4. | 50 to 59 | 13 |
| 5. | Over 60 | 2 |

9. At which university or college did you complete your teacher education program?
27 institutions were reported.

10. How long was your initial teacher education program?

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1. | 8 months | 8 |
| 2. | 12 months | 18 |
| 3. | 2 years | 29 |
| 4. | 3 years | 8 |
| 5. | 4 years | 142 |
| 6. | Other | 21 (Please specify) _____ |

11. How much teaching experience have you had ? (Please count the present year as a full year)

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1. | 1 year | 19 |
| 2. | 2 years | 21 |
| 3. | 3 years | 20 |
| 4. | 4 years | 21 |
| 5. | 5 to 10 years | 70 |
| 6. | 11 or more years | 75 |

12. For how many years have you taught at your present school? (Please count the present year as a full year)

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1. | 1 year | 59 |
| 2. | 2 years | 39 |
| 3. | 3 years | 43 |
| 4. | 4 years | 30 |
| 5. | 5 to 10 years | 43 |
| 6. | 11 or more years | 13 |

13. What languages do you speak? (Please list)

| | |
|---|---|
| 1. | 134 |
| 2. | 70 |
| 3. | 17 |
| 4. | 5 |
| 5. | Ø |

14. Are you a member of an ethnocultural group similar to that of the majority of the students whom you teach?

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1. | Yes | 142 |
| 2. | No | 84 |

**Part B : Teacher Education**

| | | YES | NO |
|---|---|---|---|
| 15. | Schools are located in a variety of sociocultural milieux. | | |
| | (a) Opportunities were available for me to experience schools in different milieux during my student teaching practica. | 113 | 108 |
| | (b) I am now working in a school which is in a similar sociocultural milieu to that in which I did my final student teaching practicum. | 111 | 109 |
| 16. | Teaching and learning methods were placed within a sociocultural context during my teacher education program. | 72 | 151 |
| 17. | I was given special preparation which focused on the ethnocultural diversity of contemporary classrooms. | 49 | 175 |
| 18. | Efforts were made to identify those student teachers who were interested in teaching in ethnoculturally different schools. | 48 | 173 |
| 19. | In the practicum, I was given the opportunity to teach in a variety of ethnoculturally different schools. | 60 | 162 |
| 20. | There is a need for teachers with a specialized knowledge of ethnocultural diversity at the school in which I now work. | 92 | 123 |
| 21. | Courses in my teacher education program provided me with an understanding of : | | |
| | (a) Sociolinguistic development | 90 | 129 |
| | (b) The ethnocultural diversity of contemporary schools | 70 | 150 |
| | (c) A variety of ethnoculturally appropriate teaching styles | 42 | 176 |
| | (d) A variety of ethnoculturally appropriate learning styles | 47 | 171 |
| 22. | Pre-service teacher education courses which attempted to develop cultural sensitivity. awareness, and knowledge were part of my pre-service teacher education program. | 71 | 150 |
| 23. | Pre-service teacher education courses which attempted to provide students with information on First Nations history, culture, or philosophy were part of my pre-service teacher education program. | 63 | 160 |
| 24. | Pre-service teacher education courses which attempted to explain different theories of ethnocultural minority student learning and achievement were part of my pre-service teacher education program. | 51 | 171 |
| 25. | Pre-service teacher education courses which attempted to provide students with the skills to analyze and adapt curricula so that they have ethnocultural relevance and applicability were part of my pre-service teacher education program. | 38 | 185 |

Please indicate whether you strongly disagree (**SD**), disagree (**D**), neither disagree nor agree (**N**), agree (**A**), or strongly agree (**SA**) with the following statements. Please feel free to make comments about general or specific issues in the space at the end of this section.

| | | SD | D | N | A | SA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 26. | It is appropriate that student teachers receive specialized knowledge of ethnocultural diversity. | 6 | 7 | 21 | 114 | 78 |
| 27. | Pre-service teacher education courses which attempt to develop cultural sensitivity, awareness, and knowledge should be compulsory for all teachers. | 6 | 10 | 22 | 104 | 84 |
| 28. | Pre-service teacher education courses which attempt to provide students with information on First Nations history, culture, or philosophy should be compulsory for all teachers. | 5 | 20 | 48 | 92 | 59 |
| 29. | Pre-service teacher education courses which attempt to explain different theories of cultural minority student learning and achievement should be compulsory for all teachers. | 6 | 10 | 39 | 106 | 63 |
| 30. | Pre-service teacher education courses which attempt to provide students with the skills to analyze and adapt curricula so that it has ethnocultural relevance and applicability should be compulsory for all teachers. | 6 | 14 | 33 | 100 | 71 |

**General comments :** Please feel free to make any general comments you might have about your teacher education program, and the usefulness of that program as a means of preparing you for teaching in an ethnoculturally diverse classroom.

31.

91 responses.

**Part C : Beginning Teaching.**
Research shows that many beginning teachers experience certain common problems. Please indicate whether you strongly disagree (**S D**), disagree (**D**), neither disagree nor agree (**N**), agree (**A**), or strongly agree (**S A**) with the following statements. Please feel free to make comments about general or specific issues in the space at the end of this section.

| | SD | D | N | A | SA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 32. In my first year, I had difficulty in : | | | | | |
| (a) dealing with individual differences in learning abilities | 18 | 58 | 27 | 95 | 25 |
| (b) identifying the level of individual student knowledge | 14 | 73 | 27 | 77 | 29 |
| (c) writing accurate and informative reports for parents. | 20 | 75 | 48 | 65 | 15 |
| (d) overcoming the low motivation of students to learn | 23 | 68 | 31 | 77 | 24 |
| (e) overcoming the low English standard of learners | 19 | 73 | 60 | 51 | 17 |
| (f) dealing with slow learners | 17 | 70 | 48 | 72 | 12 |
| (g) maintaining classroom control | 51 | 86 | 31 | 38 | 16 |
| (h) knowing what disciplinary measures were acceptable to the school administration | 42 | 80 | 35 | 51 | 15 |
| (i) finding that non-teaching tasks took up too much time in the classroom | 13 | 51 | 42 | 74 | 43 |
| (j) being able to adapt curricula to reflect local culture and meet local needs | 15 | 61 | 68 | 62 | 15 |
| 33. In my first year, I experienced : | | | | | |
| (a) a low level of support from my principal | 77 | 66 | 25 | 33 | 24 |
| (b) a low level of support from my teaching colleagues | 100 | 81 | 15 | 25 | 4 |
| (c) a low level of support from the parents | 42 | 90 | 43 | 36 | 14 |
| (d) insufficient time for lesson planning | 20 | 41 | 35 | 73 | 55 |
| (e) a lack of library resources | 30 | 60 | 36 | 63 | 34 |

| | | SD | D | N | A | SA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 34. | The orientation period for new teachers should include the opportunity to : | | | | | |
| | (a) discuss case studies which explore ethnocultural issues. | 3 | 17 | 50 | 130 | 23 |
| | (b) review school policies and procedures manuals. | 1 | 5 | 23 | 141 | 53 |
| | (c) discuss school discipline practices. | Ø | 2 | 8 | 120 | 93 |
| | (d) review standard school operating procedures. | Ø | 3 | 14 | 137 | 66 |
| | (e) review teaching methods which were considered, by experienced teachers, to be most compatible with the distinct learning styles of the children in the school. | Ø | 4 | 24 | 109 | 87 |
| 35. | In comparison with continuing teachers at the school, I believe that new teachers should be given : | | | | | |
| | (a) extra planning time. | 10 | 50 | 51 | 77 | 36 |
| | (b) additional resources to equip their classroom. | 4 | 59 | 57 | 70 | 34 |
| | (c) opportunities to observe more experienced teachers. | 1 | 5 | 11 | 110 | 97 |
| | (d) opportunities for collegial collaboration. | 1 | 2 | 10 | 120 | 90 |
| | (e) special workshops and/or in-services. | 1 | 7 | 29 | 111 | 76 |
| | (f) the opportunity to choose a 'buddy' who would act as my mentor during the first year. | 3 | 16 | 112 | 93 | 4 |

**General comments :** Please feel free to make any general comments you might have about your first year of teaching.

36.

95 responses.

**Part D : Teacher Experience** These questions refer to YOUR PRESENT POSITION, not to any previous teaching experience you might have.

| | | YES | NO |
|---|---|---|---|
| 37. | Special culturally-related skills were mentioned in the job advertisement to which I responded. | 51 | 171 |
| 38. | Specific cultural information about the community and the school was provided in the job advertisement to which I responded. | 39 | 180 |
| 39. | I was interviewed for this postion before I was hired. (If NO, please go to Question 48) | 183 | 40 |
| 40. | During the interview, I was asked questions about my linguistic compatibility with the community. | 50 | 130 |
| 41. | During the interview, I was asked questions about my ethnocultural compatibility with the community. | 55 | 128 |
| 42. | The interview for the position I now hold took place in the school. | 112 | 72 |
| 43. | The interview took place in the community. | 78 | 102 |
| 44. | The interview took place over the telephone. | 10 | 169 |
| 45. | Both community members and professional educators were involved in interviewing me for the position. | 65 | 118 |
| 46. | Only community members were involved in interviewing me for the position. | 8 | 174 |
| 47. | Only professional educators were involved in interviewing me for the position. | 115 | 68 |
| 48. | Once I was hired, there was a planned period of orientation to the school and the community. (If NO, go to Question 53) | 62 | 159 |
| 49. | During the orientation period, I was given : (a) the opportunity to discuss case studies which explored ethnocultural issues. | 8 | 73 |
| | (b) the opportunity to review school policies and procedures manuals. | 55 | 24 |
| | (c) the opportunity to discuss school discipline practices. | 54 | 25 |
| | (d) the opportunity to review teaching methods which were considered, by experienced teachers, to be most compatible with the distinct learning styles of the children in the school. | 26 | 53 |
| 50. | Both community members and professional educators were involved in the orientation activities. | 31 | 50 |

| | | YES | NO |
|---|---|---|---|
| 51. | Only community members were involved in the orientation activities. | 1 | 81 |
| 52. | Only professional educators were involved in the orientation activities. | 44 | 38 |
| 53. | In comparison with continuing teachers at the school, as a new teacher I was given : | | |
| | (a) extra planning time. | 11 | 210 |
| | (b) additional resources to equip my classroom. | 21 | 200 |
| | (c) opportunities to observe more experienced teachers. | 43 | 178 |
| | (d) opportunities for collaboration with colleagues. | 113 | 106 |
| | (e) special workshops and/or in-service sessions. | 87 | 135 |
| | (f) the opportunity to choose a 'buddy' who would act as my mentor during the first year. | 43 | 177 |
| 54. | The school in which I teach focuses on the needs of ethnocultural minority students. | 91 | 124 |
| 55. | The school in which I teach has distinct policies with respect to the teaching of ESL and non-standard English speakers. | 67 | 149 |
| 56. | In my classroom, I utilize ESL teaching strategies on a daily basis. | 72 | 148 |
| 57. | In my teaching I : | | |
| | (a) adjust my marking when students speak non-standard English. | 133 | 66 |
| | (b) take into account non-standard spoken English when assessing reading/writing skills. | 157 | 44 |
| | (c) regularly set homework. | 121 | 93 |
| 58. | Generally speaking, the teachers in the school at which I teach : | | |
| | (a) have high expectations for student achievement. | 186 | 38 |
| | (b) are punctual and well organized. | 201 | 23 |
| | (c) have different expectations as to what constitutes acceptable/unacceptable behavior by students. | 115 | 109 |
| 59. | I live in the same community as the majority of students from my school. | 97 | 128 |

Please indicate whether you strongly disagree (**SD**), disagree (**D**), neither disagree nor agree (**N**), agree (**A**), or strongly agree (**SA**) with the following statements. Please feel free to make comments about general or specific issues in the space at the end of this section.

| | | SD | D | N | A | SA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 60. | Specific cultural information about the community and the school should be provided in the job advertisement. | 4 | 8 | 54 | 113 | 37 |
| 61. | The interview is an effective way to determine an applicants' knowledge of the specific linguistic and ethnocultural composition of the community. | 2 | 27 | 49 | 134 | 13 |
| 62. | A planned period of orientation to the school and community should be provided to all new teachers. | 1 | 9 | 24 | 127 | 63 |
| 63. | Children should have home (first) language fluency before learning a second language. | 5 | 33 | 63 | 73 | 47 |
| 64. | The main reason for school failure is lack of educational support from the home. | 8 | 39 | 45 | 80 | 51 |
| 65. | Generally speaking, in the school at which I teach : | | | | | |
| | (a) the physical teaching environment is poor. | 88 | 89 | 20 | 23 | 6 |
| | (b) parents initiate most home-school contact. | 85 | 99 | 28 | 9 | 3 |
| | (c) there are enough resources for me to be an effective teacher. | 19 | 46 | 20 | 107 | 33 |
| 66. | At the school in which I teach, there : | | | | | |
| | (a) is good classroom management shown by most teachers. | 1 | 15 | 14 | 134 | 61 |
| | (b) are large amounts of graffiti on the walls. | 154 | 54 | 11 | 6 | 3 |
| | (c) is strong leadership provided by the principal. | 24 | 17 | 35 | 77 | 73 |
| | (d) is a lack of school spirit. | 43 | 92 | 34 | 46 | 10 |
| | (e) is a task-focussed approach. | 6 | 39 | 72 | 90 | 12 |
| | (f) is an emphasis on reading instruction. | 4 | 36 | 46 | 102 | 38 |
| | (g) is a major problem with truancy. | 70 | 63 | 31 | 34 | 24 |
| | (h) is a great deal of unacceptable behavior. | 51 | 73 | 24 | 53 | 23 |
| | (i) is an emphasis on math instruction. | 1 | 40 | 70 | 83 | 30 |

67. Please indicate which **one** of **each** of the following pairs of ethnocultural values is most prevalent in your classroom :

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| (a) Cooperation | 1. 188 | or | Competitiveness | 2. 33 |
| (b) Group orientation | 1. 130 | or | Individualism | 2. 77 |
| (c) Religious Focus | 1. 30 | or | Secular Focus | 2. 174 |
| (d) Single sex education | 1. 7 | or | Coeducational | 2. 199 |

**General comments :** Please feel free to make any general comments you might have about your initial teaching experiences at this school, and suggest ways (if appropriate) in which the school might have better prepared you for teaching in an ethnoculturally diverse classroom.

68.

65 responses.

**PLEASE SEE THE BACK PAGE FOR IMPORTANT INFORMATION**

---

THANK YOU FOR TAKING THE TIME TO COMPLETE THIS SURVEY.

**PLEASE PLACE YOUR SURVEY IN THE ENVELOPE PROVIDED AND MAIL IT BACK TO THE RESEARCHER.**

ALL SURVEY FORMS ARE CONFIDENTIAL !

THEREFORE, PLEASE ALSO MAIL THE POSTCARD WHICH CONFIRMS THAT YOU HAVE RETURNED YOUR SURVEY. THIS IS THE ONLY WAY THAT I WILL KNOW NOT TO SEND YOU A REMINDER NOTICE!

**THANK YOU MERÇI CHÓ TENIKE**

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P.S. The second stage of the study will involve a series of telephone and personal interviews with a limited number of respondents to this survey. If you are willing to be considered as a possible interviewee for stage two of this study, please check the appropriate box on your confirmation postcard.

# Appendix 2: Interview Schedule

## INTERVIEW #X

**Demographic data**

**Questions**

1. OVER 45% OF THE RESPONDENTS TO MY SURVEY DESCRIBED THEIR STUDENTS AS BEING ETHNOCULTURALLY HETEROGENEOUS. IN YOUR EXPERIENCE, WOULD THAT BE AN ACCURATE DESCRIPTION OF TODAY'S SCHOOLS?

2. THERE SEEMS TO BE A WIDESPREAD BELIEF THAT TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAMS ARE NOT REALLY RELEVANT TO THE 'REAL WORLD' OF TEACHING. WHAT ARE YOUR OPINIONS OF THAT STATEMENT?

3. DO YOU BELIEVE THAT YOUR TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAM PROVIDED YOU WITH AN AWARENESS OF A VARIETY OF EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES TO USE IN ETHNOCULTURALLY DIVERSE CLASSROOMS?

4. IF YOU WERE ABLE TO INFLUENCE THE DEVELOPMENT OF A NEW TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAM, WHAT SORT OF THINGS WOULD YOU INCLUDE?

5. AS A BEGINNING TEACHER, WHAT WERE THE MAIN PROBLEMS YOU FACED?

6. THERE IS A WIDELY HELD BELIEF THAT MANY NEW TEACHERS ARE PLACED IN SITUATIONS WHICH ARE REFUSED BY MORE EXPERIENCED TEACHERS - THE WORST STUDENTS, THE MOST COURSES, AND SO ON. WHAT IS YOUR OPINION OF THIS BELIEF?

7. WHAT DO YOU THINK SCHOOLS COULD DO TO MAKE THE FIRST YEAR OF TEACHING MORE EFFECTIVE AND LESS STRESSFUL?

8. MY DISSERTATION IS ABOUT THE PRESERVICE AND INSERVICE PREPARATION OF TEACHERS FOR ETHNOCULTURALLY DIVERSE CLASSROOMS. WHAT OTHER ISSUES DO YOU THINK I SHOULD INCLUDE IN THIS RESEARCH?

# Appendix 3: Correspondence

University of Alberta
Edmonton
Canada T6G 2G5

Department of Educational Administration
Faculty of Education
7-104 Education Building North, Telephone (403) 432-5241



November 1994

Dear Principal,

As I am sure you are aware, our schools are rapidly becoming places of variety. There is a greater diversity in the student population now than at any time in the past. All too often, it appears, new teachers are not given the kinds of preparation needed to help them develop the appropriate skills for effective teaching of ethnoculturally diverse student classes. As Principals, we have to help our teachers develop the skills to be effective in such situations. To do this, we must first know both what skills they have and also what other skills are required.

For my PhD research I am trying to determine exactly what types of ethnocultural preparation new teachers are receiving, both in their pre-service programs and during their early years in the profession. With the approval of your central office personnel, your jurisdiction is one of 6 selected to take part in this study. I should be grateful if you would distribute the enclosed surveys to members of your staff, starting with first year teachers (if any) and then progressively to the more experienced teachers. Although the survey only takes about 20 minutes to complete, not all teachers may wish to participate. If so, please involve more experienced teachers.

In the packages are stamped, self-addressed envelopes in which the questionnaires should be returned. There are also postcards, so that I can determine how many responses I received from the school (and send reminder notices, if necessary). I hope that you will encourage your teachers to complete this questionnaire, and look forward to receiving their comments.

Yours sincerely,

Tim Goddard

J. Tim Goddard

P.S. A copy of the letter of approval from your jurisdiction is attached.

University of Alberta
Edmonton
Canada T6G 2G5

Department of Educational Administration
Faculty of Education
7-104 Education Building North, Telephone (403) 432-5241



November 1994

Dear Colleague,

**THE ETHNOCULTURAL PREPARATION OF TEACHERS**

Your cooperation is being sought in order to increase our knowledge about the ethnocultural preparation of teachers. This study involves teachers in a number of different jurisdictions across Alberta and Saskatchewan. Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.

Demographic data indicate that the ethnocultural composition of students in Canadian classrooms is rapidly changing. What is not clear, however, is whether teacher education programs (both pre-service and in-service) are also changing so as to better prepare teachers for ethnoculturally diverse classrooms.

The Teacher Education, Experience, and Cultural Effectiveness (TEECE) Scale has been designed so as to determine the extent to which teachers have been prepared to be effective educators in ethnoculturally diverse classrooms. Pilot testing of this instrument indicates that teachers require approximately 20 minutes to complete the questionnaire.

There are four sections to this survey. The first seeks demographic information about your school and yourself. The second section explores your experiences during your teacher education program. Some questions require a simply yes/no answer and others are statements which seek to obtain your perceptions about certain aspects of the program. Please indicate whether you strongly disagree, disagree, neither agree nor disagree, agree, or strongly agree with those statements. In the third section please make similar indications with respect to different aspects of your experiences as a beginning teacher. The fourth section seeks general information about your teaching experiences in your present school.

In accordance with the Ethics Guidelines of the University of Alberta, all responses in this study will be coded but shall otherwise remain anonymous to all but the researcher. This study has approval from the appropriate administrative personnel in your jurisdiction. Your participation is voluntary and you have no obligation to complete the survey. Should you have any questions, concerns, or comments relating to this study, please contact either myself or the supervisor of this study.

Many thanks.

Tim Goddard

**J. Tim Goddard**
**Ph.D. Candidate**

**Telephone**

**(403) 435-9390**

Supervisor :

**Dr. E. W. Ratsoy**
**Professor**

**(403) 492-3373**

THANK YOU FOR PARTICIPATING IN THIS STUDY

University of Alberta
Edmonton
Canada T6G 2G5

Department of Educational Administration
Faculty of Education

7-104 Education Building North, Telephone (403) 492-5241
Fax (403) 492-2024



January 4, 1995

**Re : The Ethnocultural Preparation of Teachers (Ph.D. Research Project)**

To: **ALL PARTICIPATING TEACHERS**

Thank you so much for completing my research questionnaires, which were distributed by your principal before Christmas. The completed surveys continue to arrive and I hope to be able to start my data analysis within the next few weeks.

Thank you also to those who returned the postcard confirming that you had indeed completed and mailed the survey. Those of you who indicated that you were willing to be considered for a telephone interview can expect to hear from me, if your name is drawn, towards the end of January or the beginning of February. Those who indicated that you would like to receive a copy of the results should expect to receive this before the end of the school year.

If you have not yet completed and mailed the survey, may I ask you to please do so as soon as possible. I think that it is important that the opinions and thoughts of teachers are reflected in this study, and I would naturally like to have as large a sample as possible of those opinions. If nothing else, a high return would convince my wife that our investment in stamps and return envelopes was worthwhile!

Thank you again for your assistance and cooperation in this research project. With all good wishes for 1995,

Yours sincerely,

Tim Goddard

J. T. Goddard

**J. Tim Goddard**
**Department of Educational Policy Studies**
**7-150 Education North**
**Faculty of Education**
**University of Alberta**
**EDMONTON**
**Alberta T6J 5K7**

Please check ( ) as appropriate :

___ I have completed and mailed the questionnaire (The Teacher Education, Experience, and Cultural Effectiveness Scale).

___ If selected by random draw, I am willing to be contacted by telephone and interviewed further on this topic (The Ethnocultural Preparation of Teachers).

[If you check this item, please provide a contact telephone number (evenings) :
( ) _____ - _____ ]

___ I wish to receive a summary of the results of this research project.

My name and mailing address are as follows (please print) :

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Please mail this card at the same time that you mail the completed questionnaire.
Thank you.

## Curriculum Vitae

**John Timothy Goddard**

Old Maryvale Road, RR#3, Antigonish, Nova Scotia B2G 2L1

Home Telephone: 902-863-4787 Office Telephone: 902-867-2464

e-mail: tgoddard@juliet.stfx.ca

### Biographical Notes

1953 Born in Leeds, Yorkshire, England.

1974 Certificate in Education.
Hockerill College of Education, Bishop's Stortford, Hertfordshire.
Art, Geography, Principles of Education.

1978 Elected Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society, London.

1988 Bachelor of Education (magna cum laude).
University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan.
Indian and Northern Education; Native Studies.

1990 Master of Education.
University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan.
Educational Administration.
Thesis: Looking in: The influence of the community.
Supervisor: Dr. J. Pyra.

1996 Doctor of Philosophy.
University of Alberta, Edmonton, Alberta.
Educational Administration.
Dissertation: Fractured paradigms: Preparing teachers for ethnocultural diversity
Supervisor: Dr. E. W. Ratsoy.

## Awards and Scholarships

| | |
|---|---|
| 1988 | Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation Prize |
| 1988-89 | University of Saskatchewan Graduate Scholarship |
| 1989 | LEADS Award for best thesis in the field of Educational Administration |
| 1993-94 | University of Alberta Doctoral Scholarship |
| 1994-95 | Izaak Walton Killam Memorial Scholarship |
| 1995 | Invited participant, UCEA National Graduate Student Research Seminar in Educational Administration. San Francisco, California. April. |

## Work Experience

| | |
|---|---|
| 1995-present: | Assistant Professor. Department of Education, St. Francis Xavier University, Antigonish, Nova Scotia. |
| 1990-1993: | Superintendent of Education. Lac La Ronge Indian Band, La Ronge, Saskatchewan. |
| 1989-1990: | Principal. Attagoyuk School and Alookie School, Pangnirtung, Baffin Island, Northwest Territories. |
| 1984-1987: | Principal. Black Lake Band School, Black Lake, Saskatchewan. |
| 1983: | Subject Department Head. Aiyura National High School, Kainantu, Eastern Highlands Province, Papua New Guinea. |
| 1981, 1982: | Principal. Kiriwina Day High School, Trobriand Islands, Milne Bay Province, Papua New Guinea. |

1979, 1980: Acting Subject Department Head. Passam National High School, Wewak, East Sepik Province, Papua New Guinea.

1976-1978: Teacher. Cameron Provincial High School, Alotau, Milne Bay Province, Papua New Guinea.

1974-1975: Teacher. St. Marks Comprehensive School, Harlow, Essex, England.

**Recent Publications**

Goddard, J. T. (in press). The preparation of teachers for ethnocultural diversity. In M. E. Dilworth, G. P. Smith, & C. A. Grant (Eds.), The relationship of the knowledge base to human diversity. Washington, DC: American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education.

Goddard, J. T. (1995). Encouraging reflective teaching through an improved model of supervision and evaluation. Canadian School Executive, 15 (4), 3-5.

Goddard, J. T. (1994). Review of G. K. Varma, Ed.: Inequality and teacher education: An international perspective. CAUT•ACCPU Bulletin, 41 (10), 13.

Goddard, J. T. (1994). Private schools, school reform: Smoke and mirrors or a new educational paradigm? Teaching Today, 12 (4), 5-7.

Goddard, J. T. (1993). Band controlled schools: Considerations for the future. Canadian Journal of Native Education, 20 (1), 163-167.

**Selected Recent Presentations**

Goddard, J. T. (1996). Inquiry or internship: Whither educational administration?: Paper accepted for presentation to the Canadian Association for the Study of Educational Administration at the Annual Conference of the Canadian Society for the Study of Education. St. Catharines, Ontario. June.

Goddard, J. T. (1996). Preparing teachers for ethnocultural diversity. Paper accepted for presentation to the Canadian Association for Teacher Education at the Annual Conference of the Canadian Society for the Study of Education. St. Catharines, Ontario. June.

Goddard, J. T. (1996). Reversing the spiral of delegitimation. Paper accepted for presentation to the Annual Meeting of the Society for Socialist Studies. St. Catharines, Ontario. June.

Goddard, J. T. (1995). Reorganizing the governance of a school district to facilitate community and school based decision making. Presentation to the Cape Breton-Strait Regional School Board Amalgamation Transition Committee. Port Hawkesbury, Nova Scotia. November.

Goddard, J. T. (1995). The ethnocultural preparation of teachers. Paper presented to the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association. San Francisco, California. April.

Shields, C., & Goddard, J. T. (1995). An ethnocultural comparison of empowerment in two districts: A Native American and a Canadian First Nations school system. Paper presented to the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association. San Francisco, California. April.